



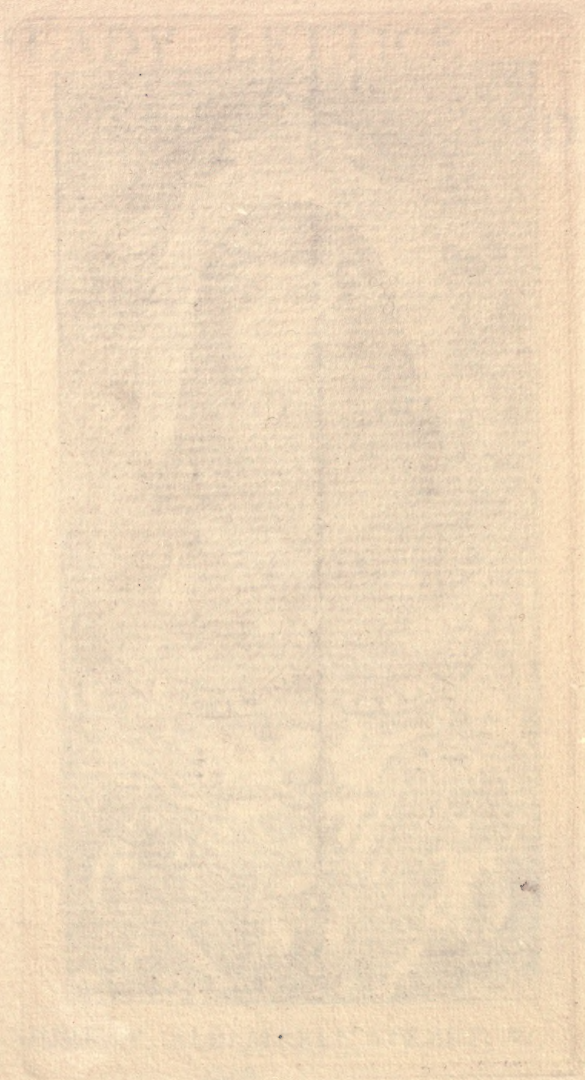
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LADY LETTICE
VI-COUNTESS FALKLAND



‘LADY LETTICE,
VI-COUNTESS FALKLAND’





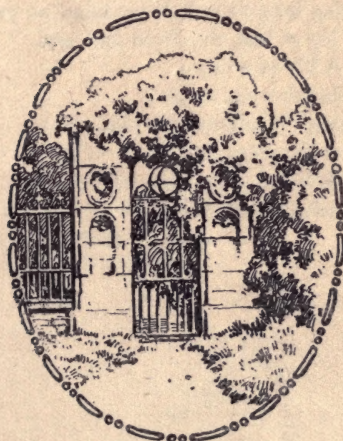
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'LADY LETTICE VI-COUNTESS FALKLAND'

BY JOHN DUNCON

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION, BY
M. F. HOWARD



GATEWAY IN GARDEN OF MANOR HOUSE, GREAT TEW

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1908



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‘ It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be ;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere.

A lily of a day

Is fairer far in May.

Although it fall and die that night,

It was the plant and flower of light.

In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.’

BEN JONSON : *Ode to the
Memory of Henry Morison.*

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TO
K. M. B.

PREFACE

THE idea of this book was suggested to me by the sympathetic account of Lettice Lady Falkland's remarkable, pious, and beautiful life given in the chapter on Great Tew in Mrs. Sturge Henderson's 'Three Centuries in North Oxfordshire.'

References to Lady Falkland in the seventeenth century biographers, Anthony à Wood and John Aubrey, are full of respect and admiration ; whilst Lord Clarendon—her husband's most intimate friend—describes her as 'a lady of most extraordinary wit and judgment, and of the most signal virtue and exemplary life that the age produced' ('Life,' i. 45). There are glimpses of her gentle presence and influence in his 'Character of Lord Falkland,' and also in a biography of her mother-in-law, Elizabeth, first Lady Falkland ; but the real charm of her personality only appears in the little book of consolation written by her chaplain,

Dr. John Duncon* (1648). It gives a vivid picture of the life of a devout lady of the seventeenth century—one of the many pious Royalist widows. She would be interesting merely as ‘the dearly-beloved wife Lettice’ of Lord Falkland; but her own fascination becomes additionally apparent in the simple story of her great sorrows, and of the eager, loving, and practical spirit in which she grappled with the social problems of her time and sphere. Her methods of charity may seem obsolete, but they are characterized by that directly personal contact and sympathy which is now recognized as the highest type of social service. This, with her earnest sense of responsibility and her idealism for herself and for others, makes her life as instructive to those who work as to those who suffer.

The sincerity of Dr. Duncon’s narrative gives it a real value as a record of spiritual experience, and although perhaps, as a whole, it can scarcely claim to be regarded as a book of devotion suitable to the present day, yet it contains so much that is intensely human in thought and aspiration, so much that is as appropriate to the needs of to-day as to those of three centuries ago, that I

* See footnote, p. 3.

believe it will appeal to many, and I have therefore incorporated a large part of the spiritual letters in this volume.

The description of her life and character to be found in the Rev. W. H. Teale's 'Life of Lord Falkland' has been helpful to me in many ways.

My thanks are due to the friends who have taken an encouraging interest in the preparation of this book ; also to Viscount Falkland for very kindly allowing me to reproduce the portrait in his possession.

M. F. HOWARD.

February, 1908.

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ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, GREAT TEW.

INTRODUCTION

THE rapid development of biography is one of the most interesting features of English literature in the seventeenth century. Before this period it scarcely existed in an independent form, except for a few Lives of kings—where the interest was scarcely psychological—and the stories in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs.' The place of the modern obituary notice was taken by the elegy, which was especially popular with the superficially cultured Eliza-

bethans. Although the pastoral laments usually miss the note of personal sorrow, there is a stately reticence in their pseudo-classicism which is not lacking in good taste and feeling. The death of Ben Jonson, in 1637, was deplored in a little volume of elegies written by his friends and imitators—including Lord Falkland. A few years later, similar poems were inscribed to the memory of Lucius Cary himself, but the truest portrait of the man and his life was written much later on, in the autobiography of his greatest friend, Lord Clarendon. This appreciation of Lord Falkland is, in form, closely allied to the 'Characters,' which were as fashionable a craze of literary aspirants in the metaphysical Jacobean period as the sonnet was of the poetical Elizabethans. Perhaps the earliest example of a prose biography of the modern type is Izaak Walton's 'Life of Dr. Donne,' published as a preface to his works in 1640. The distinctive note of seventeenth-century monographs—elegies or Characters—is their idealism, for they are all based upon sympathy and personal friendship.

A very representative little book, published in the last year of the reign of Charles I., combines the different elements of biography—elegy, Character, and narrative—in a quaint and pathetic

manner. It is a memorial of Lady Falkland, written by her chaplain and two friends for her mother and the ladies who had known and loved her during her short lifetime. The greater part is a theological and rather mystical discussion upon spiritual joy and sorrow, which the chaplain had composed for Lady Falkland a few months before her death. The biography was an afterthought, written to her mother in the form of a letter, and added to the second edition of 'The Returns of Spiritual Comfort and Grief in a Devout Soul.'¹ As prologue and epilogue there are two elegies, more conspicuous for enthusiasm than poetry, but typical examples of the weaker Caroline verse. They imitate the conceits and far-fetched metaphors of Herbert and Donne, and the epigrams which delighted Crashaw—all the artificialities and mannerisms which show decadence in any school of

¹ The whole book—'The Returns of Spiritual Comfort and Grief'—was republished, 1653, with additions, and again about 1760. The first edition (1648) has disappeared, and the second (1649), to which the biography was appended, seems to have become rare by the time Antony à Wood wrote his 'Life of Lord Falkland.' The 'Life of Lady Falkland' was modernized and slightly adapted by Gibbons, and included in his work 'Eminently Pious Women,' published in 1777, 1804, and 1815. The Rev. W. H. Teale added a short account of Duncon's 'Life of Lady Lettice' to his 'Life of Lord Falkland.'

poetry. The authors had scarcely escaped from Ben Jonson's influence, but there is no trace of the conventional classical elegiac style, and the poems are biographical. Their metre is the heroic couplet dear to the later seventeenth-century poets, but their spirit is that of the early Caroline writers, and the combination is suggestive of Jacobean epitaphs. They were written by members of an Oxford college, and signed with initials which probably represent Jaspar Mayne and R. West, or Walter, who had been Lord Falkland's fellow-contributors to 'Jonsonius Virbius,' the collection of elegies on the Poet Laureate. The longer and more elaborate poem, by Mayne, seems to have been written from a personal knowledge of Lady Falkland's life and character, though his appreciation was founded upon a partial misunderstanding. The biography shows that her purity of soul was that of flame rather than snow. The elegies are confirmed in their praise by the later testimony of Lord Clarendon, who described her as 'a lady of most extraordinary wit and judgement, and of the most signal virtue and exemplary life that the age produced.'

Incidentally the elegies throw some light upon the state of religious feeling in the Royalist party. The

standpoint of the two poets is that of the tolerant orthodox Arminian (characteristic of Oxford life and thought at that period), to whom such saintliness as Lady Falkland's was a virtue rather than a necessity. But they held the doctrine of special vocations in spiritual things, and reckoned her with those elect souls called apart for superior sanctity.

'Show me your Legends, you in whose bright Year
More Saints and Martyrs than black Daies appear :
Martyrs and Saints whose consecrated Names
Stand shining there as in their second Flames.
'Mongst all your Tecla's, Bridget's, Friswid's ; all
Your fiction-Saints ; or which we true Saints call ;
You will not find one He, or She, more fit
To be extoll'd or canoniz'd in Wit,
Than this departed Ladie, who embalms
All Poetrie, and turns all Verse to Psalms.'

With equal assurance the other poet declares :

'Her deeds are more than boldest nuns do vow,
The legends will turn a true histrie now.'

Although not wholly free from exaggeration, in thought and word, the Life written by her chaplain, John Duncon, is far more spiritual in tone, and truer in its view of her character. He had a closer knowledge of the facts of Lady Falkland's last years, and also a great sympathy and reverence for her personally. His deep admiration of her

saintliness, and his gratitude to her and to her widowed mother, Lady Morison (who lived with her at Great Tew), must account for his tendency to obsequiousness.

John Duncon had been deprived of his living, at Rattenden in Essex, by a Parliamentary Commission, about 1642 or a little later. His political opinions were probably the chief reason of his sequestration, for his sympathies were so obviously loyal that malice and ignorance were sure to effect his displacement by slander or misrepresentation. He explains his position in the preface to 'The Returns of Spiritual Comfort and Grief in a Devout Soul.'

'It hath fared with me (by the extraordinary blessing of God) as sometimes it doth with Shipwrecked Mariners, to be cast off a tempestuous Sea, into a rich Island.

'Had I gone onward in the voyage I set out for (attending my Cure in Essex), I could not have promised my self so much content and satisfaction (no, not in outward respects) as my happy Shipwreck (by Sequestration from my Parsonage) hath gained me. I left Houses and Friends, but God provided (according to His promise S. Mark x. 30) even these worldly Comforts, with an hundredfold Advantages.

'I shall offer no other proof for it than that I was received with full Accomodations, and plen-

tifull Conveniences in the House of the Right Honourable Vi-Countess Falkland.

‘ And in this Family, while I was reaping Carnall Things, there appeared to me a necessity of sowing Spirituall things.

‘ This virtuous Lady afflicted with Barrenness in her Soul wanted Inward Comforts ; and I, being the nearest (though the meanest) of God’s Ministers, undertook that Office of Comforting.’

In Lady Falkland’s household at Great Tew¹ John Duncon seems to have found his inspiration and the great opportunity of his life—first, in his ministry to Lettice Cary herself ; later on, in the publication of the letters representing her spiritual conflicts and his own advice and comfort ; lastly, in the short biography which gives so intimate and vivid a picture of one of the noblest yet most typical women of the early seventeenth century.

John Duncon published no other book, and died before the Restoration. Although his theology was narrow, and his literary powers were not great, there is a certain charm and individuality in his work. His style is transitional—it is not as affected

¹ Great Tew is in North Oxfordshire, about seventeen miles from Oxford. The Manor House was pulled down and rebuilt at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The stables and dovecote of Lord Falkland’s house are said to remain.

as that of Donne, or Dr. Featlie, the writer of Lady Falkland's favourite book of devotions, but it has not the direct simplicity of Izaak Walton. Many of Duncon's phrases are quaintly beautiful in their naïve poetry, and may be compared with Walton at his best. But as a rule the overstrained metaphors (especially Scriptural), the occasional prolixity, and the love of pseudo-metaphysical self-analysis, reflect the fantastic prose of the early Caroline writers. His thought is limited in range, but it is curiously representative of the elements which composed the faith of an orthodox Churchman at that period. With Herbert, Laud, and the High Church party, John Duncon is intensely loyal to the teaching of the Prayer-Book ; his advice on the inner life of the soul is deeply tinged with the mysticism which probably came to him through the influence of Nicholas Ferrar ; but there are traces of the austerity of the Puritans, their distrust of human love and joy, and their gloomy opinions on election and reprobation.

John Duncon thus describes the origin and growth of his book :

' After frequent Communication with this Lady, having learned all her Objections against herself, and having seen the chief sorrows of her heart, I

composed them into these Letters, and annexed these Answers to them, and left them with her.

‘ And now they are the Figure of a Pious Soul, with its vicissitudes of Comfort, and Grief ; The Lineaments of which Figure I have drawn (as you will understand by comparing the Treatise with the Life hereunto annexed) from that Holy Ladies Soul ; lest she (for whom alone it was at first decyphered) should think it too general ; but the Proportions, and Degrees, I drew not exactly from her ; those I heighten here and there, lest you (for whose benefit it is now Published) should think it too Particular.

‘ So it will appear that these Letters, and their Answers, are not a strict Relation, but a Representation ; And in them I have taken the Liberty of a Representor, to express the height of Comfort, and the depth of Sorrow, suddenly succeeding one to the other ; One and the same Soul yesterday on the top of Mount Tabor, shining with the excess of Comfort, and to-day on the top of Mount Calvary, pierced through with the sharpest points of Sorrow ; And though this be not ordinary, yet some such there have been and are.

‘ But you, perhaps, are one of those Holy Souls, who walk in the plain low way, unacquainted with Heights and Depths ; And though so, in this Representation you may see the various Dispensations of God, and from it you may learn (however God hath been pleased to deal with you heretofore ; or however He shall be pleased to deal with you hereafter) to be fervent in Spirit, and to be zealous to the end.

‘ The other annexed Letter is not a Representation of what the Lady should have been, or how she ought to have lived, and died, but a strict Relation, of some Spiritual Comforts and Grievs, with their Returns ; and of many excellent virtues in the Life of the late Vi-Countess Falkland ; which particulars were gathered up and put together, at the request of some of her dear Friends, who have promised (as it is hoped you also will) to be followers of her as she was of Christ, and then to strive to excel in every grace and virtue.

‘ If in anything you receive Comfort, or Benefit, let God have the praise, and pray for me, who am

‘ Your friend and servant in our Lord Christ,

‘ J. D.’

At the end of the Life, it may be noticed that John Duncon describes the preceding letters as a collaboration in which Lady Falkland herself took a large part :

‘ I have prefixed a discourse (by way of Letters too) wherein much of a *Character* of this your Daughter is contained ; It was composed for her, and delivered to her, and left among her Papers, (and though upon the transcribing of the Letters I have altered and added somewhat, yet that was according to her desire, and the directions I received from herself after her perusal of them) ; and your Ladyship will quickly discern that many of the objections, and of the answers too, came from her own self, and therefore proper enough to be joyned with this relation of her Life.’

Bishop Earle, the friend of Lord Falkland, had written short 'Characters' of a child, an antiquary, a contemplative man, and many other types—keen-sighted, witty, and rather satirical studies of man, the microcosm.¹ John Duncon, the 'sequestered parson,' with unconscious boldness, described the Devout Soul, in 'general,' and Lady Falkland in 'particular'—it is probable that Bishop Earle also had 'particular' cases in his mind. There is no question of a pious fraud in the 'Representation by means of Letters'—a form of literature for which Duncon had at least one precedent, in Lyly's 'Euphues.' The whole work as he conceived it is not the correspondence of Lady Falkland and her chaplain, but a study of the spiritual life of a pious soul.

Early in 1649, when a second edition of Duncon's book was published, by Richard Royston (an enthusiastic Royalist), a similar study or 'Character' appeared from the same press, and caused much excitement and controversy. In the 'Eikon Basiliké' ('The King's Image') very similar problems present themselves, for there is the same uncertainty of authorship, notwithstanding Duncon's explanation of his own part in the Letters,

¹ 'Microcosmographie,' by John Earle.

and Gauden's somewhat incredible claim to the 'Eikon Basiliké.' Did Charles I. write the meditations which form an 'Apologia pro Vita Sua,' or was Bishop Gauden or some other chaplain¹ the interpreter of his hidden life, as Duncon was to Lady Falkland?

It would be preferable to believe in the King's authorship of the 'Eikon Basiliké,' for no sympathy is adequate to the task of writing an impartial and yet appreciative 'Character.' Personality is too elusive for analytic description. Consequently, John Duncon's view of Lady Falkland is sometimes obscured and falsified by exaggeration, and very often by an apparent misunderstanding of her motives. His greatest merit as a biographer is his habit of quoting her own words, and her quaint speeches often have a deeper though more obvious meaning than her chaplain recognized. Lettice Cary was essentially a mystic, but, in the spirit of St. James, she instinctively translated her emotion into action, her faith into works. Even her arguments, her impulsiveness, and her 'anguish and bitterness of

¹ The Rev. Edward Simmonds, who brought the King's MS. to the printer, had been Rector of Rayne in Essex. It is probable that he knew John Duncon.

spirit,' show the depth and reality of her character, and sometimes make Duncon's serene orthodoxy seem a little dull and superficial. Unhappily, he did not fully realize how far her depression was due to ill-health, and he commended, though he did not advise, a much stricter asceticism than she should ever have practised.

Lettice Cary's life was an aspiration, but she was an intensely human woman, and, though starting with a clearer spiritual insight than many souls, she had no scorn of earth, and little of the mystic's impatience. There was no dullness in her life—in joy and sorrow alike she lived vividly and truly. Mayne's elegy rises to an almost Wordsworthian thought in describing her youth :

' A stage of life, in which appear'd all seeds
Of after-virtue, yet unmixed with weeds.
Here did begin her studies, which then told
How young she was in years, in grace how old.
Whose other Scriptures were God's creatures, where
She heard Him speak t' her eye, as that t' her ear ;
And like the Hebrew shepherd, in each blush
Of flowers beheld Him flaming in a bush,
Once more unburnt, thence thought she heard a sound,
Which told her, God thus seen made holie ground.'

Her early life at her country home in Leicestershire, and her romantic marriage for love, seem to

have been as ideally happy as earth allows. 'I have had my portion with the first—no one woman more,' she testifies. There had been times of doubt and depression, nevertheless, and she had a natural tendency to melancholy, which appears first in the youthful temptation to despair (a foreshadowing of the trials of her later years). Her brother's death must have been the greatest sorrow of her girlhood, but it is probable that Sir Henry Cary's resolute opposition to her marriage with his son, and his obstinate refusal of forgiveness, may account for some part of her 'anguish and bitterness of spirit.'

As John Duncon states, her afflictions began with the separation caused by her husband's departure for the Scotch campaign in 1639, 'When her dear lord and most beloved husband, that he might be like Zebulon (a student helping the Lord against the mighty), went from his Library to the Camp; from his Book and Pen to his Sword and Spear.' From this time onward he was deeply engaged in political duties, and, having identified himself with the Royalists, he was made Chief Secretary of State in 1641. The Civil War broke out in the following year, and Lord Falkland fought with a desperate and reckless courage which, added to his

obvious anxiety and grief for the national troubles, occasioned the suspicions which arose after his death at the Battle of Newbury (September 20, 1643).

Lady Falkland survived him for three years, 'a most disconsolate widow,' finding her only possible comfort in devotion and the strict performance of her duty to her children and dependents. Loyal though she was, it is likely that the political troubles had affected her most painfully through her husband's distress; and from the mournful seclusion of Great Tew, after his death, the great struggle was regarded with less excitement than sorrow. References to the war are few and vague, but it cannot be forgotten that the spirit of the time was full of strife and suffering, and that Duncon's picture of Lady Falkland's life is painted upon a dark background—as it were, of distant battlefields.

II

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Civil War broke the hearts of both Lord and Lady Falkland. But even in a time of peace and prosperity, Lettice Cary was too emotional and too sensitive for any lasting satisfaction with earthly

joy, and she never ceased to look through and beyond things temporal for things eternal. She was a devout Churchwoman, and the first letter in Duncon's book describes in detail her religious exercises, and their resultant spiritual joy.

'Now and then I compare the former pleasures and delights I had in worldly things, at Court, with these I now enjoy, and I account them all as dross in comparison of these.'

But the chaplain responds with a warning, as well as encouragement.

'All such comfort and delight (as you seem to speak of) is not spiritual or lasting ; In these holy exercises . . . there is an outward and sensible comfort, as well as an inward and spiritual comfort ; and these sensible consolations (as they are called) not so lasting and permanent, as these inward comforts are.'

His correspondent replies :

'That clause in your letter of Spiritual and sensible consolations, I do not clearly apprehend ; how (I pray) can there be sensible consolations in Inward and Spiritual things ?'

In the next Answer the chaplain explains his meaning in a characteristic metaphysical theory.¹

¹ Duncon seems to have studied some modern mystical writers, especially S. Francis de Sales, as well as the Fathers.

It is somewhat mystical and abstruse, but Lady Falkland was a cultured and intellectual woman, and, later on, complained of herself: 'If I could abridge myself a little of the pleasure I take in Philosophy and History.'

'I must subdivide the Soul,' John Duncon writes, 'into a Lower region and an upper; I mean, into Sensitive and Rationall faculties; the lower region or the Sensitive part, consists of the Inward senses, Imagination and Memory, etc., the Upper region or Rationall part consists of the Understanding and Will, and answering to these two parts of the Soul, there are Spiritual and sensible consolations.'

This is merely a preface to the main argument, and in the next letter, using the phraseology and distinctions thus expounded, the devout soul laments the decrease of her 'sensible consolations.'

Throughout the letters there is no obvious refer-

The Spanish mystics were popular in England with a certain section of the High Church party (*cf.* Crashaw's enthusiasm for St. Teresa, and Abraham Woodhead's edition of her 'Life'). Nicholas Ferrar, of Little Gidding, translated the 'Hundred and Ten Divine Considerations,' by Valdes, a Spaniard. An Italian translation of this book was presented to the Bodleian Library in 1639 by one John Duncomb, Rector of Swannington, near Norwich. Possibly this was John Duncon.

ence to the events of Lady Falkland's life, but it is clear that her spiritual conflicts were caused by her grief for her husband. With her widowhood, a great change came over her spirit. There may be some morbidity in her view of the sorrow which had fallen upon her, but there is more to be admired in the faith and love which still endured, though her health was failing and her heart broken. Henceforward she modelled her life and character upon the Sermon on the Mount, and this resolve is the framework of John Duncon's description of her widowhood, so that the outward story becomes the symbol of her inward growth in grace. To the chaplain, it seemed a triumphal progress in the way of Holiness, but to Lettice Cary herself (judging by her words and the letters) the imitation of Christ included the *Via Dolorosa*—the 'King's Highway of the Holy Cross.'

But the crisis which occasioned the writing of the letters came in November, 1645, two years after her husband's death, when she lost the youngest of her three children, Lucius, Henry, and Lorenzo. As John Aubrey says, she was 'much governed by and indulgent to the nursery,' and this boy was specially dear to her because of the promise of his character—and partly, perhaps, on account of the

delicate health which he and his eldest brother seem to have inherited.

In the biography there is a pathetic but brief description of her sorrow and the spiritual difficulties which followed this trial, but the problem is discussed through several letters. John Duncon writes:

‘ If God will not have any love of yours run waste upon consolations, but elevate it all to Himself, you have no more reason to complain than the Child, from whom the Nurse is withdrawn that the Mother might gain its chiefest affections ; or supposing God bestowed comforts (especially those sensible) on you because of the infirmity of your condition, but now hath strengthened you to subsist without them, you have no more reason to complain than the Cripple that is healed, for the loss of his Crutches.’

The chaplain’s theory of life sometimes seems to place all earthly blessings in the category of ‘ comforts ’ for the lack of Absolute Joy in this world—depriving them of their value as a real, though not essential, part of that joy. Lettice Cary did not accept this Puritan doctrine without a struggle, but there is almost a note of bitterness in her words on earthly love—‘ Oh, love me not, I pray, too much, and God grant I never love my friends too much hereafter ; that hath cost me

dear, and my heart hath smarted sore with grief for it already.' The words 'sound harshly' to us, as they did to her dearest friends, but it is likely that she foresaw her early departure, and would have saved them from mourning for her too deeply. The ascetic view of human love and joy had no attraction for her, and refusal of earthly happiness was no part of her philosophy of life, but she advocated temperance in affection, and fully recognized the claim of a higher love. Moreover, the truest earthly love is seldom free from an element of selfishness which entails purification by sorrow. The problem discussed in the letters is summed up in that pathetic speech which gives the keynote of her life: 'Oh, I have had my portion of these very comforts with the first; no one woman more; but there is no lasting or true pleasure in them: There is no real comfort from any espousals, but from those to Christ.'

In some measure, she accepted her earthly sorrows with resignation, but a feeling of desertion developed from her grief, and drove her to despair. She could feel no joy in her faith—the chaplain insisted upon its necessity, even in tribulation.

'There is a joy which is the fruit of the Spirit, and it constantly ariseth from faith in God, and love of

Him ; and there is the fullness or superabundance of that joy . . . the first is a Grace, the second is a Reward . . . the first is a most necessary fruit of our Faith and Love, and doth always accompany them. We love Him not unless we rejoice in Him . . . whereas this second is a bountiful expression of God's extraordinary grace towards us ; a foretaste (indeed) of the joys of Heaven. The first is as the Christian's daily bread ; this second as their festival cheer.'

To this his correspondent replies :

' Alas, instead of my former Omer of Joy, I do not now find this Ephah ! And if my joy wholly fails, what love can there be in me ?'

John Duncon's solution is full of insight and sympathy, with all its mystical metaphysics.

' The Schoolmen are wont to say that all the while our most blessed Saviour Christ lived upon earth there was (as it were) a traverse [screen] drawn between the beatifical vision and the *sensitive* faculties of Christ's human soul ; and that when our Saviour was upon the Cross, and cried out, " My God, My God ! why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" then the traverse was drawn between the beatifical vision and the *reasonable* faculties of His human soul.

' This may be applied to many good Christians. . . . As there was a true hypostatical union between God and man in Christ while He cried out so upon

the Cross, though the manhood had no vision of the Godhead ; so there is still a mystical union between God and your soul, though you have no vision or appearance of it. *Subtracta est visio, non soluta est unio.* Love still unites you to God, and there is joy and other necessary graces with it, too, though you wanted the comfort of them in your sensitive faculties for a long time, and now also in your reasonable.'

But the question of the disinterestedness of her love, which was Duncon's greatest anxiety, is the occasion of his finest passage :

' Your Love, that most precious and excellent affection of your Soul, shall by this desertion be advanced to God, and appropriated to Him alone. Then you may see how weak that Love is, when we love God only or chiefly for that parcel of Mercy or comfort which He is pleased to communicate to us ; and that the strength of love is to love that infinite mercifulness and incomprehensible goodness that is in Him ; to love God more for that Ocean in Himself than for these few drops He sheds down upon us ; for His own goodness more than for our benefit or comfort by it—this, this is the strength of love.'

There is comfort in the very theory of sorrow as a discipline, for meek souls with Lettice Cary's intense desire for perfection. Yet the worst pain of her desertion was the thought that her own sin had

caused it, for, as Julian of Norwich said : ' There is no harder hell than sin.' There are pathetic confessions in the letters of faults chiefly due to her bodily weakness. ' I am actually slothful and will not, and then I excuse it that I am naturally weak and cannot,' she complains. Another lament is equally human :

' I have some jealousies . . . worldly-mindedness may be shrewdly accessory to this my desertion. I am too busily (I fear) imploied in the things of this world to have and retein that portion of heavenly comfort ; I traffick too much on this side Jordan to have those sweets of the land of Canaan.'

Nevertheless, her worst faults were almost virtues in excess—an unconscious selfishness in affection, a dread of offending those whom she loved, and some degree of impatience and impulsiveness. Though they were at the root of her worst ' desertion,' they seem little more than the sins of a child. In answer to the most despairing letter, the chaplain repeats an earlier warning that her fear may be a great temptation of the Evil One, and ends with a prayer that it may quickly pass away. The next letter recounts the return of joy to the devout soul :

' Now my joys return ; I now behold the face of God, and feel His comforts in the service and wor-

ship of Him, and therefore every hour seems five until the hour of Prayer comes. . . . If barrenness be so fruitful, and yields such a plentiful harvest, oh, my soul ! be thou never hereafter troubled at it. Resolve thou rather with Habakkuk, cap. 13. 17 : " Though there be no Oile of Joy nor wine of comfort—no, nor blossom on the Olive or Vine (no appearance or hopes of any Oile or Wine for refreshment)—yet will I love the Lord and rejoice in my God "; and then press forward (O my soul) towards that of Job, cap. 13, 15 : " Etiamsi occideres, though I be parched and withered with drought, and consumed with barrenness, though Thou killest me (O Lord) with it, yet will I love Thee and trust in Thee." '

The argument of the book ends with this attainment of a higher type of spiritual joy in the tenth letter, but two more letters and answers follow as an epilogue, with advice on questions of conduct and encouragement for continuance and progress. The chaplain enforces his early warnings against the delusions of a false joy in a way which shows his knowledge of mystical theories. The devout soul, practical as ever, is ' full of diligence in holy duties and exercises of devotion,' and, ' though increasing in holy fear and godliness, is much troubled with doubts and scruples.' Some passages may be read in close connexion with the biography.

‘ Though God hath given me a most sincere and unfeigned desire to please Him, yet in many things I offend, in most things I fear and doubt. One while, I fear, I indulge too much liberty to others, and too little to myself ; another while, that I am too strict to others, and too remiss to myself, and therefore I mete not to others as I mete to myself. I multiply queries against myself—whether this duty was well performed or not ; this action lawful or not ; that word or silence seasonable or not.’

John Duncon’s conclusion, with its sympathetic counsel, is characteristically quaint :

‘ And now at last . . . you seem to grudge all time which is not spent by you in holy Duties and Prayer, and you think fit to advance in them as in other graces and virtues. Love, I see, is liberal, and where you love much you will still be giving more.

‘ And the more you increase in Love, the less will that seem to be which you bestow ; that which is much now will seem less hereafter. And if you think fit your holy duties of Prayer and Meditation should advance still, in proportion to your Love : Remember withall that of Jacob (the mighty man of Prayer) to drive no faster than the children and cattle (your weak body, *Jumentum animæ*, as the Fathers call it) are able to endure.

‘ Now, my Prayer shall be, That all these shakings by doubts and scruples may tend to root you more deep and more firm in the love of our Lord

Jesus Christ, to Whose grace and mercy I commend you, and rest

‘ Your servant in Christ Jesu,
J. D.

‘ *December 23, 1646.*’

These letters seem to have been the chaplain's Christmas gift to Lady Falkland a few weeks before the journey to London which hastened her death. At the end of her life there was no ecstasy and no terror ; ‘ her tranquillity of mind was most observable.’ She sent all who could be spared to pray for her in the church. So much of her life was bound up with that church at Great Tew that her friends must have found hope and comfort there from a fuller realization of the Communion of Saints. To those who stayed with her, she said only, ‘ Fear God, fear God !’ and so rested in peace.

It was an elementary truth, for ‘ the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,’ yet the fear which is reverence can never be outgrown. Moreover, ‘ the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.’

It was not the spirit of bondage which pervaded Lettice Cary's life, but the spirit of loving service. With all their characteristic thoroughness and spontaneity, her actions are so practical and so wise in

their unworldliness that they clear her from the charge of morbidity. There was nothing superfluous in the charities which seem formal or fussy in John Duncon's record. They supplied a real need, for the cottagers whom she helped and visited were dependent upon the bounty of the richer classes to an extent which it is hard to realize now. Even the house-servants, whose welfare occupied so much of her time and thought, were probably unable to read, and were certainly untrained in the refinement and Christian courtesy which Lady Falkland desired in her household.

It seems that the ideal which the domestic life at Great Tew Manor followed during Lady Falkland's widowhood was the standard of that at Nicholas Ferrar's 'Protestant Nunnery' at Little Gidding (a much-criticised but beautiful endeavour to revive the professed religious life). One of John Duncon's brothers was a High Church divine, and another was Edmund Duncon, who had been sent from Little Gidding to George Herbert's deathbed in 1633, and was entrusted with the poet's manuscripts. He lived in close connexion with the Ferrars for some years. It is more than likely that John Duncon had shared this intimacy, and that his account of their ordered

and devout lives had a great influence upon Lady Falkland.

One of her most cherished plans was that for the establishment of

‘ places for the education of young Gentlewomen, and for retirement of Widows . . . hoping thereby that learning and religion might flourish more in her own Sex than heretofore, having such opportunities to serve the Lord without distraction.’

It is said that Burford Priory,¹ an estate which Lord Falkland sold to the Speaker, Lenthall, had seemed to her especially adapted for such a purpose. It was a large Elizabethan manor-house, with a Jacobean chapel. This scheme seems to have been suggested, or influenced, by the success of the community at Little Gidding, which chiefly consisted of Nicholas Ferrar’s widowed mother and sister and several nieces. The ‘ Nunnery ’ had been

¹ Burford Priory, in Oxfordshire, the birthplace of Lord Falkland, was left directly to him by his grandfather, Lord Tanfield. The house has been rebuilt with the old materials, and made smaller, but it still has a fine Elizabethan front. The chapel was unaltered, and is in much better repair than the house, which is falling into ruin. Teale seems to be the only authority for its connexion with Lady Falkland’s plans, but his supposition is not improbable, as she spent some part of her early married life there, before it was sold to Speaker Lenthall in 1634.

commended so highly by Charles I. and other visitors, and was so much in harmony with the ideas of many Royalists, that, in a more settled time, Lady Falkland would have had little difficulty in carrying out her project.

This influence accounts also for the apparent tendency towards asceticism and conventual life, which is rather exaggerated, not only by John Duncon and the writers of the two elegies, but also by W. Marshall, the artist who designed the symbolical frontispiece to 'The Returns of Spiritual Comfort and Grief in a Devout Soul.' Emblems (reminiscent of Quarles) representing the contents of the book are surmounted by a portrait of Lady Falkland, in which the nun-like characteristics of her face are emphasized by a black widow's veil, which is hauntingly suggestive of a conventual dress. A visitor to Little Gidding writes :

'The habit of the young women, nine or ten or more of them, was black stuff all of one grave fashion, always the same, with comely veils on their heads.'

Duncon records of Lady Falkland that 'the vanity of apparel and dresses she had cut off long before, and after her Husband's death the richness of them, too.' During his lifetime she had certainly

dressed to please his taste, since 'clothes and habits . . . he had minded with more neatness and industry and expense than is usual to so great a soul,' for two earlier portraits represent her in the elaborate dress of the period. In her girlhood she was exquisitely pretty, with a pensive and gentle expression which reveals a tendency to a rather sensuous type of mysticism. A later portrait is dignified and reserved, with a somewhat cold refinement, but it lacks the charm of her personality.

The frontispiece portrait, though it represents Lettice Cary in her thirty-fifth year, worn with sorrow and ill-health, has a much more youthful expression. In spite of exaggerations and possible inaccuracies, the artist had caught the spirit of her life, and, to the utmost of his power, he depicted the soul he saw. Her eagerness and sincerity are evident, and her pathetic humility and wistfulness make the same appeal as the letters of inquiry. Her features show very plainly, in their unearthliness and transparency, 'that look we have on our faces who die young.' The small chin, the large and beautiful eyes, and the sadness of her mouth, all give an impression of flower-like purity and fragility. It is not a weak face—unless the innocence of a child is weakness—and the extreme sen-

sitiveness is that of a fine spirit, capable of suffering, not with passive endurance, but with a power of realization of pain which made even sympathy an agony to her. The deepening of spirituality makes this the best and truest of the portraits, for it shows a woman who loved much, whose strongest characteristic was devotion too earnest to be invariably wise and reasonable. Yet her great capacity for joy is visible enough, and it is easy to imagine a smile, wistful and quaintly humorous as her little epigrammatic sayings. Perhaps she was too sincere to be wholly serious, and sometimes John Duncon seems to record a playful remark or thought so ponderously that the point is obscured or lost. But although he did not always understand her real meaning, he quoted her actual words in the letters or the life simply because she had spoken them, and her friends would love to remember them. The whole book—and this is, perhaps, the only excuse for the publication of her biography with the letters, which she had probably authorized Duncon to print—is a book of friendship, written by and for those who loved Lady Falkland.

The keynote of the volume is sounded with no uncertainty in the text which forms its motto.

Sorrow and suffering are not mere tests of faith and love, but a 'means of grace,' and a way towards the ultimate and eternal joy. So, through all his deep sympathy, and even while he recognized pain as a chastening discipline, John Duncon's theme is Christian gladness, and thus he could write on the papers he 'composed for and delivered to' Lady Falkland: 'We are helpers of your joy.'



INTERIOR OF ST. MICHAEL'S, GREAT TEW.

(Lord and Lady Falkland were buried here, but their graves are not known.)



LETTICE, VISCOUNTESS FALKLAND.

From the portrait by Cornelius Janssen in the possession of
Viscount Falkland.

[To face p. 32.

A LETTER CONTAINING MANY REMARKABLE
PASSAGES IN THE MOST HOLY LIFE AND
DEATH OF THE LATE LADY LETICE,
VICOUNTESS FALKLAND

WRITTEN TO THE LADY MORISON AT GREAT TEW IN
OXFORDSHIRE¹

‘MADAME,

‘It is the desire of some Honourable Personages to have an exact account of the Death of your most dear Daughter, the Lady Falkland; they being privy to much piety in her life, expect (as well they may) somewhat most remarkable in her sickness and death.

‘And for the comfort of you, and for the satisfaction of them, I have gathered together some scattered particulars of her life, sickness, and death, and have sent them unto you. That the most precious perfume of her name, being poured out (like S. Mary Magdalen’s box of Spikenard), may

¹ Second Edition, 1649. London: R. Royston.

fill your and their houses. And though this relation of so many eminent virtues in her, would not (perhaps) have appeared so handsome from your own pen (because so deep a share of the praise belongs to you), yet you need not blush at the delivering of it ; it may consist with your modesty, to be a witness of the truth of these particulars ; though not to be a Publisher of them.

‘ And if the memory of that most holy Lady, continue precious amongst us ; and her holy example efficacious with us ; and God (who sanctified her here, and now glorifies her in heaven) be magnified and honoured for his mercies and graces, I have all I aim at.

‘ I shall note somewhat remarkable in the very beginning of her Christian race ; more, in her progress, and proficiency in it ; and then come to the last stages, when the crown, at the end of the race, was (as it were) within her sight and view.

‘ This elect Lady set out early in the ways of God, in the dawn or morning of her Age : There was care taken while she was young, that she should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; She came not from her nurse’s arms, without some knowledge of the principles of Christian religion.

‘ While she was very young, her obedience to her Parents (which she extended also to her Aunt, who had some charge over her, in her Father’s house) was very exact ; and as she began, so she continued in this gracious and awful temper of duty and observance : I have heard you say (Madame) that you cannot remember any one particular, wherein at any time, she disobeyed her Father, or you.

‘ That her time might not be mis-spent, nor her employments tedious to her, the several hours of the day had variety of employments assigned to them ; and the intermixing of prayer, reading, writing, working, and walking, brought a pleasure to each of them, in their courses ; so that the day was carried about faster, than she would, and she begins in this her youth, to abridge herself of sleep, and was oftentimes at a book in her Closet, when she was thought to be in bed.

‘ You remember wel¹, I presume, the Purse her young fingers wrought for her own alms, and how importunately she would beg your single mony to fil it ; and as greedy she was of emptying it too ; the poor seldome went from the house without the alms of the young daughter, as wel as of the Parents.

¹ The spelling of the original is followed throughout.

‘ And how constant she was then, at her private Prayers, I ghesse (guess), by what I have heard from the keeper of your house. When strangers were in her own room, where she ordinarily had her retirements, he was called to give her the key of some other chamber for that purpose, at her hour of Prayer. She would procure a new Oratory, rather, than omit, or defer, that duty.

‘ And how powerful with God, the lifting up of her pure hands everywhere, in this her innocent Childhood was, soon appeared. For while her piety and holiness was in this bud, a violent attempt there was made to blast it. About the thirtieth year of her Age, there was a form of temptation raised in her, and some arguments the tempter had suggested to drive her to despair of God’s mercy towards her : And this I note the rather, because it is not ordinary at such years, to have attained to that growth, as to be thought fit for those encounters : But God upheld this young twig, against such a storm, which hath torn up many a fair tree : For see after some anguish of spirit, and patience in the combate, and earnest praiers, God’s grace was sufficient for her : And surely it was not the strength of her hands, at this

Age, but the pureness of them, which prevailed for her.

‘Some there are, whom God leads from the spirituall Ægypt, to Canaan, not by this way of the Philistines, lest they should repent when they see war, and turn back again into Ægypt (Exod. 13. 17). But her (it seems) God trained up in this military course ; and from her youth exercised her in it, that she might be expert at it.

‘After this conquest, her soul enjoyed much peace and tranquility, and she went on most cheerfully in holy duties, and tasted much comfort and delight in them :

Extract from Letter 2.

‘I bless God Who openeth His hand wide, and poureth out plentifully His comforts upon me ; And so much the more must I praise Him for this goodness of His towards me, because (as you inform me in your letter) these comforts are not common to all ranks of holy Christians, but to Beginners chiefly.’

Compare the chaplain’s answer to Letter 10 :

‘These consolations . . . are sometimes a special gift of God, which He bestows upon some men to invite them and allure them by the sweetness of them to His service, and one whose heart is still stony may have them and receive the word with joy (St. Matth. 13. 20). And at other times God

bestows these consolations after regeneration to strengthen them ; regenerate and encourage them in His service.

‘ Secondly, these consolations sometime proceed from our own temper, and from our natural constitutions ; some men, and many women, have such soft constitutions and tender tempers, that the affections of joy and grief are very soon raised in them, they may soon be dissolved (as it were) into sighs and tears ; and they are soon dilated and enlarged with the cheerful expressions of love and joy.’

‘ And her heart was ever and anon so full, that out of the abundance of it, she would say, “ Oh, what an incomparable sweetness there is in the musick upon David’s harp ; oh, what heavenly joy there is in those Psalms, and in praiers, and praises to God ; how amiable are the courts of God’s house ; how welcome the days of his solemn worship !”

‘ And now, nothing can hinder her from those holy Assemblies ; Every Lord’s Day constantly, forenoon, and afternoon, she would be with the earliest at them : Some while (when she wanted a convenience of riding) she walked cheerfully three or four miles a day, as young, and as weak, as she was, to them : And at night she accounted the joys and the refreshments, which her soul had been par-

taker of, a sufficient recompense, for the extream weariness of her body.

‘ And within a short while by reading good Authors, and by frequent converse with learned men, she improves (by God’s help) her natural talents of understanding, and reason, to a great degree of wisdom and knowledge.

‘ And now these riches, of her piety, wisdom, quickness of wit, discretion, judgment, sobriety, and gravity of behaviour, being once perceived by Sir Lucius Cary,¹ seemed Portion enough to him : These were they, he prized above worldly Inheritances, and those other fading accessions which most men court.

‘ And she being married to him, riches and honour, and all other worldly prosperity, flow in upon her, and consequently to proceed in holiness and godliness grows an harder task, than before it

¹ She was the daughter of Sir Richard Morison, and her brother, Sir Henry Morison, was Lucius Cary’s intimate friend at Cambridge. The Morisons lived at Tooley Park, near Leicester. Henry died about the age of twenty, and Ben Jonson wrote an elegy describing the friendship between the two young men. Lucius Cary married Lettice Morison soon afterwards, against his father’s will (Sir Henry Cary’s estate was much embarrassed, and he wished his son to marry a richer woman).

seemed to be ; it being much more difficult when riches and honor thus increase, then, not to set her heart upon them.

‘ Yet God enabled her by his grace for this also ; for when possession was given her of stately Palaces, pleasantly seated, and most curiously and fully furnished, and of revenues and royalties answerable, though your Ladyship hath heard her acknowledg God’s great goodness towards her, for these temporal preferments, yet neither you, nor any of her friends, could perceive her heart, any whit exalted, with joy for them.

‘ They were of the Babylonian’s retinue, who when they had seen Hezekiah’s riches and treasures set their hearts upon them (Isai. 39). This true Israelite reserved her affections, for those riches which never fade, and for those dwellings, which are above, where the City is of pure gold, and the walls garnished with precious stones.

‘ This confluence of all worldly felicities and contentments, did so little affect her, that there were some seemed displeased at it ; and then she would attribute much of it to a melancholick disease, which was then upon her ; And though I deny not, but that some worldly delights might fall by the hand of her melancholy, yet doubtless where the

disease slew its hundreds, grace slew its ten thousands.

‘ And in this condition some years passed, during which time, she was most constant at Prayers, and Sermons, and frequently received the blessed Sacrament ; and although now, and then, she felt not her wonted spirituall Comforts, but in stead of them had some anguish, and bitterness of spirit, yet by the advise of good Divines, and by her ordinary help of Prayer, she recovered soon her peace and joy.

Extract from Letter I.

‘ Your Spiritual directions I have observed as punctually as I could : I am present at all publike Assemblies in the house of God, and bear my part constantly in the solemn worship of His Name. And to these publike devotions I add private Prayers with my family, Morning and Evening, and to them, Secret in my Closet, and these duties I perform constantly . . . for I remember you told me that that strict precept of the Apostle, “ Pray continually,” hath not ordinarily a more qualified sense than this, “ Observe your set times of Prayer constantly, without intermission.”

‘ Neither am I less constant at Sermons and Catechizings, and at the Holy Sacrament of our most blessed Lord’s Body and Blood, though I cannot be so frequent at these duties ; Those I

can hear but once a week, This I can receive but once a month. And on days of Humiliation, I labour to intermix more earnest as well as more frequent Prayers, for the publike necessities, and for mine own private wants ; endeavouring to observe the Ordinary and Extraordinary Fasts of the Church, as strictly as my weak body and my weaker flesh will admit.

‘ And that which I relate all this for, which I dare not divulge to others nor conceal from you, is this : my exceeding great delight in these spiritual exercises. While I hear, or read, I taste much sweetness in the promises of the Gospel ; and while I pray or meditate, I receive much Comfort and Delight ; my soul is filled as it were with marrow and fatness, and my heart is almost ravished with spiritual joy.’

‘ Thus in severall conditions of youth, and ripe yeares of virginity and marriage ; and amongst contrary temptations, of adversity, and prosperity, affliction, and comfort, she continues that course of holy Life, which she had begun ; a great proficiency, and a far progress this : yet I crave leave to reckon it all into her beginning, for this was but slow in respect of that great agility, and quick speed, she attained unto, in the other part of her spirituall race.

‘ Her proficiency and progress I shall account from that time, when her prosperity began to

abate ; when Her dear Lord, and most beloved Husband, that he might be like Zebulon (a student helping the Lord against the mighty, Judg. 5. 14), went from his Library to the Camp ; from his Book and Pen, to his Sword and Spear ; and the consequent of that, an inevitable necessity, that she must now be divorced from him, for a while, whom she loved more than all the things of this world ; this was a sad beginning : but that totall divorce, which, soon after, death made between him and her ; that he should be taken away by an untimely death, and by a violent death too, this, this was a most sore affliction to her ; the same sword which killed him, pierced her heart also.

‘ And this heavy affliction which God sent upon her, she interpreted for a loud call from heaven, to a further proficiency in piety and virtue.

Extract from Letter 4.

‘ I have no stream of Comfort at all in my Devotions, no comfortable blast of the Spirit to set me forward, and a heavie load of dullness and drowsiness to retard me, and yet I must make as quick a dispatch as when I had no such impediment against me and a full stream for me : Yet for these late weeks I have set myself strictly to observe that and your other directions ; but alas, Sir, the more

I struggle with my disease the more it increaseth upon me.'

The chaplain replied :

' There is a Spiritual desertion of grace and a Spiritual desertion of comfort. The *first*, when God withdraws His Holy Spirit and divine Grace from us, for some notorious sin committed against Him. The *Latter*, when He withdraws only the joy and comfort of that Grace which is still with us.

' And this latter kind of Spiritual desertion may be in the best saints of God upon Earth. . . . (It) may be inflicted upon you, *Ob caritatis profectionem*, as an incentive to love. . . . Or, Secondly, . . . *ob humilitatis custodiam*, as a preservative against pride, that humility may grow more in you ; a Thorne in the flesh, lest you should be exalted above measure with the abundance of heavenly Consolations. And, if so, who will complain, though the honey and the honeycomb be taken away from him, when he hath eaten sufficient, and is in danger to surfeit by the rest ?'

' And yet she fears it may be a punishment also upon her, for some sin or other, and therefore strictly examines her self, and ransacks every corner of her heart, to find out wherein she had provoked God to lay this great affliction upon her ; and to make sure, she renues her repentance for all her transgressions ; and her godly sorrow for her sins past, is as fresh, as if it had been for the sins of yesterday.

Extract from Letter 5.

‘ Upon a view of my actions since the last solemn Humiliation of my Soul, I find many defects and failings, and though I cannot charge myself with any one notorious sin unrepented of (blessed be God my upholder), yet, while I am compassed about with so many infirmities and imperfections, negligences, and ignorances, I cannot but fear, too probably, that for some of these it is that God in displeasure withdraws those His comforts from me.

‘ And can there be a greater heart-sore than this, that my dearest comforts should be taken away, yea, driven away from myself by myself !’

‘ And now she addresses her self to a Divine of great eminence for piety, and learning¹ ; and from him she takes directions for a more strict course of life in this her Widowhood, than for-

¹ This may have been Dr. Eleazar Duncon, who was attached to the High Church party, and was one of the King’s chaplains. Dr. Triplet had been tutor and chaplain to Lord Falkland. Hugh Cressy, John Earle, William Chillingworth, and Henry Hammond all belonged to the circle of Falkland’s clerical friends, and were frequent visitors at Great Tew. Jaspar Mayne, Canon of Christchurch, and Rector of Cassington and Pyrton in Oxfordshire, had written verses which were much admired by Lord Falkland, and he was (almost certainly) the author of the longer elegy on Lady Falkland. He also was a personal friend.

merly ; now she forgetting quite what was behind, presses forward to what was before, and, as if she had done nothing yet, she begins anew.

‘ And though the greatest and chiefest part of her Christian work, was locked up close within her self, and some of it very studiously and industriously concealed by her (that she might be sure no degree of vaine glory, should creep upon her with it), yet much of it appeared by the effects, and is now forced to come abroad before us.

‘ Her first and grand employment was, to read and understand, and then (to the utmost of her strength) to practise our most blessed Saviour’s Sermon upon the Mount, in the fift, sixt, and seventh Chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel ; and having read over a most compleat (though compendious) Comment upon that Sermon, she set forthwith, upon the work of practising it, and began with those virtues, to which the beatitudes are annexed.

‘ And her mercifulnes was none of those virtues, which she could at all conceal from us ; much of her estate (we saw) given yearly to those of her kindred, which were capable of Charity from her : And some of her neer neighbours, who were very old, and not able to work ; or very young, and not fit for work, were wholly maintained by her : To

other poor children she contributed much, both for their spiritual, and their temporal wel being ; by erecting a School¹ for them, where they were to be taught both to read and to work : much care she took, that no man, or woman, or child should want employment ; that their own hands might bring them in a competent subsistence ; and accounted that the best contrivement of her estate, which set most poor people on work ; for if it were to their profit, she little regarded her own detriment in it.

‘ So that her principal care herein, was to keep them from Idleness (that root of all sin and wickedness), for by another contrivement of her estate, she might have received more profit, and thereby have been better able, to relieve them, though by this only, she was able to set them on work.

‘ A most eminent piece of mercifulnesse this, where corporall and spirituall mercy went together, and wisdom guided both.

‘ And for the poor at home, and for strangers at

¹ About the end of the eighteenth century, a school-building, attached to or close by the church at Great Tew, was pulled down. It is probable that this was the school erected by Lady Falkland.

the dore, she was very charitable in feeding the hungry, and refreshing the faint and weak ; and for clothing the naked, in some extremities you should see this Lady her self goe up and down the house, and beg garments from her Servants' backs (whom she requited soon after with new), that the poor might not go naked, or cold from her dore : So that she was not only a Liberal Almoner to the poor, but also an earnest solicitor for them : And when it was objected, that many idle and wicked people, were by this course of charity, relieved at her house, her answer was : " I know not their hearts, and in their outward carriage and speech, they all appear to me good and virtuous ; and I had rather relieve five unworthy vagrants, then that one member of Christ should go empty away ;" And for harboring strangers, the many inconveniences, ordinarily ensuing upon it, could not deter her from it ; sometimes for some weeks together, they were entertained by her.

' And since her death, I hear of plentiful relief, here, at London, and at Oxford, sent privately to Prisons, and needy persons, with a strict charge that it should not be known whence it came ; She would not have her left hand know what her right hand gave.

‘ And this her mercifulness could not be bounded within the limits of friends, it extended itself to her enemies too ; when there were some store of them taken prisoners by the King’s Soldiers, and in great need, she consulted how she might send relief to them : and when it was answered, that such an act would raise jealousies (in some) of her loyalty to His Majesty, she replied, “ No man will suspect my loyalty, because I relieve these Prisoners, but he would suspect my Christianity, if he should see me relieve a needy Turk, or Jew : however, I had rather be so misunderstood (if this my secret Almes should be known), than that any of mine enemies (the worst of them) should perish for want of it.”

‘ And this one instance, and reason of hers is ground enough to believe, she failed not to relieve her enemies, as often as occasion required.

‘ But beyond all, her mercifulness towards the sick, was most laudable : her provision of Antidotes against infection, and of Cordials, and other several sorts of Physick for such of her neighbors as should need them, amounted yearly to very considerable sums : and though in distributing such medicinal provisions, her hand was very open, yet it was close enough in applying them, her skill

(indeed) was more than ordinary, and her wariness too.

‘ When any of her poor neighbors were sick she had a constant care, that they should neither want such relief, nor such attendance, as their weak condition called for, and (if need were) she hired nurses to serve them : And her own frequent visiting of the poorest Cottages, and her ready service to them, on their sick-bed, argued as great humility, as mercifulness in her ; yet the Books of spiritual exhortations, she carried in her hand to these sick persons, declared a further design she had therein, of promoting them towards heaven, by reading to them, and by administering words of holy counsel to them : “ There is no season more fit (she would say) for sowing good seed than this ; while the ground of their hearts is softened, and melting with sorrow, and sickness ;” And to gain this advantage it was that she was so frequent a visitor of the sick, going day after day, to their bed-side ; This Honourable Lady hath bin observed sitting in a Cottage, wayting the sick woman’s leisure, til the slumbers and fits were over, that she might read again to her, and finish the work she had begun.

‘ And of late when she could not do this good office, in her own person (she growing sickly and

weak) yet she would do it stil by proxie ; for some of her friends or servants were deputed by her, to go to the sick, with her Books too, daily ; and now and then most of her family (who were fit for such an imployment) were sent abroad on this errand.

‘ Thus ordinarily in all her works of corporal mercy, she added works of spiritual mercy, too ; relieving the wants of the body, and of the soul together, instructing, and exhorting, and earnestly persuading the poor and the sick to some virtue or other, for their souls health.

‘ Herein following the command in this Sermon, and also the example of the Preacher, our most blessed Savior : who, when He cured the diseases of the body, cured the diseases of that infirm soul too ; and at the same time, with one word, administered to the sick and impotent, both health and grace : our Savior’s practice is the gloss upon His own Text ; and this handmayd of His, was for the text, and this glosse too of mercifulnesse.

‘ And as for this, so for meekness also, she was most eminent : she was second to none of her Sex, and Age (I believe) among us, for perspicacity of understanding, and clearness of judgement ; yet as far from self-conceit, as from ignorance : her wont indeed was upon debates, to object till all argu-

ments, she could think on, to the contrary, were satisfied ; and when that was once done, no cavill was heard, but her assent readily given ; and this ready submission of her judgement to the best reasons, I mention, for the meekness of her understanding ; herein this Lady excelled some of the chiefest Rabbis, that her knowledge did not puff up, but edifie.

‘ And her understanding leading the way in meekness, her wil chearfully followed in it too ; as soon as her understanding was satisfied, her wil bowed presently and obeyed ; she seldome denied to do, what she was convinced was fit to be done.

‘ The greater difficulty was with her affections : her natural temper she would oft complain inclined her to anger ; and being so well aware of it she most diligently observed her self, and did in a great degree conquer that froward inclination : and that good measure of meekness (in this kind) which she attained unto, was the more commendable, because of the great difficulties she met with, in it.

‘ Then for peaceablenesse : as much as in her lay, and as far as was possible, she had peace with all men ; she suffered her self to be defrauded, and

damaged in her Estate, rather than she would disquiet a debtor, by suits at law ; for peace is equivalent (said she) to the summe detained.

‘ And for differences in Law among others, where she was not a Party, her Christianity engaged her to wish, and endeavour for reconciliation amongst Brethren ; but especially, when controversies arose between Neighbors, and Parishioners, she made use of all her power and art, to reconcile them.

‘ And she had her Antidotes here too, as well as her medicines ; to prevent contentions as well as to cure them. It cost her a good sum, your Ladyship knows, a while since to prevent a contention, she foresaw arising among the neighbors, about the choice of a Parish Officer : she hired one, and all was peaceable and quiet.

‘ Thus she hungred and thirsted after peace, and after righteousness too ; as the chased, wearied, and faint hart after the water brooks, so her soul seemed to long after righteousness ; frequently panting, “ Oh why am I not ? Oh how shal I be ? Oh when shal I be perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect ?”

‘ And for patient suffering. Of late she was seldom free from this or that trouble : spiritual afflictions, and sorrows, or bodily infirmities, or weak-

ness and sickness, or worldly losses, in her estate, one, or more of these, or such like pressures were constantly heavy upon her ; yet little disturbance, no impatience at all could be perceived in her ; I have seen them all upon her together, and yet her patience triumphing over them all.

Extract from Letter 3.

‘ Heretofore I took great delight in the service and worship of God ; my Prayers were refreshments, yea, banquets to me, my Fasts and Humiliations as corne and wine did feast and cheer my Heart ; By reading, or hearing God’s Word, or by meditating upon it, and by receiving the Blessed Sacrament, my soul became young and lusty as an Eagle, full of vigour and comfort ; But now dryness and sadness have taken hold upon me, and sorrow and grief overwhelm me.

‘ In the exercise of Holy Duties I am so little affected with comfort and delight that I grow now backward to them, and dull and drowsy in them ; and those times which are set apart for the publick and solemn worship of God seem now to me (as the Sabbaths to them in Amos) most tedious and long. . . . I was well aware that the delights of the world were fading and transitory, but are these Christian Comforts, these holy joys so, too ? The fire and heat of Earthly Pleasures I have oft seen suddenly quenched, and can that from heaven, heavenly, be quenched, too ? Oh, that I had wings

like a Dove, that I might flee away to those comforts and Pleasures which never fail, where there is fulness of joy, and that for evermore !'

' There were who thought her in love with suffering, when she refused to pay contribution money against the King, and suffered her stock of great value to be seized on, rather than to pay some little tax, which was demanded : This (I say) was thought much ; had not carrying the Cross, when it is inevitably layd on, bin enough ; but thus to meet the Cross, and take it up, thus forwardly to suffer damage, rather then blemish her obedience and loyalty, this was her practise ; and therefore til the King himself granted an indulgence, she patiently suffered whatsoever damage came upon her, stil refusing to pay contribution to the neighboring Garrisons, which were against him.

' And now after the exercise of all these virtues in this high degree, such a Poverty of spirit was apparent in her, as was most admirable : upon all occasions bewailing her weaknesses, and lamenting her spiritual wants : There were some about her, who had an holy emulation to be like her, in these, and such like graces and virtues, and she hath now and then overheard them, wishing, that they were

as forward, as she : and her constant reply was, " Oh, ye are not so backward ! yet wish yourselves better ; ye know not how vile and corrupt my heart is." So that in some respects she accounted her self the greatest of sinners ; in no respect would she esteem better of her self, than of the least of Saints ; a welwisher towards holines, and a beginner stil.

‘ Of late I have been searching up and down my soul for those other graces and virtues which God’s spirit had formed in me, and whereas they should grow and increase more and more, for a while they also have languished in me, and now (I fear) they are quite dead. . . . I am a weak Suppliant (God help), and a weaker Combatant. Indeed, if I should perceive my zeal working only while I am on my knees, and not other ways also . . . I dare not approve myself for that. I was wont to aim at being a stout Combatant as well as a fervent Suppliant : But now, not only my knees are feeble, but also my hands, and no zeal at all to be perceived. . . . And when I plead for my excuse (as you suggest I may), my Natural Infirmary, I fear lest that should be Self-flattery.’

‘ Thus she daily practised these graces and virtues, to which our Savior annexed such special blessings ; and studied to be stil more and more perfect in them, with as much diligence, as the

Scholar doth his lesson, and with as much success,
and good speed too.

Extract from Letter 1.

‘ Now I miss those opportunities I had at Court and at the Cathedral [Christchurch, Oxford] ; either of these places afforded publick Prayers thrice every day, and Lectures also on the week-days ; Nay, it is not here so well with me as it was, when you and I lived together in that Country Village, where the good Parson had Morning and Evening Prayer in the parish Church, twice a day continually. . . . Now we have this advantage of Publick Prayer only on the Lord’s Day and its Eve, and on Holy Days and their Eves, and on Wednesdays and Fridays, our wonted Litany-days ; now I find not that other Analogy between our Prayers, and the Incense and Perfumes of the Tabernacle, that as those were, so these are now offered up daily.’¹

‘ And from this Sermon of our blessed Savior, she learned that duty of Praier ; and her chief practise therein, she could not conceal from us neither, which was, as follows.

‘ First, she spent some hours every day in her private devotions, and meditations ; and these were called (I remember) by those of her family, her

¹ This probably refers to the Prohibition of the Prayer Book, 1645.

busy howrs ; praiers, her business ; Martha's employment was her recreation, she had spare howres for it ; Maries, was her business : Then her maids came into her chamber early every morning, and ordinarily she passed about an howr with them ; In praying, and catechising, and instructing them ; to these secret and private praiers, the publick Morning and Evening praiers of the Church, before dinner, and supper ; and another form (together with reading Scriptures, and singing Psalms) before bedtime, were daily and constantly added.

‘ And so strict was she for the observing of these severall howres of Prayer, that a charge was given her servants to be frequent (if their occasions permitted) at every of them : However, she would not endure that any one should be absent from them all ; If she observed any such, she presently sent for them, into her Chamber ; and consecrated another howr of Prayer, there, purposely for them : And she would pray with those servants privately, ere she went to bed, who had not prayed publicly with her, that Day.

‘ To pray with David, seven times a day, or with Daniel three times, is expected perhaps only from such persons, as have leisure and opportunity : but with Levi to offer up Morning and Evening Sacri-

fice, every day, this she required from the busiest servant in the house, that at the outgoings of the Morning and Evening, every one should praise God, and call upon His name.

‘ Neither were these holy offices appropriate to her menial servants, others came freely to joyn with them, and her Oratory was as open to the neighbors, as her Hall was.

‘ On the Lord’s day she rose in the morning, earlier than ordinarily ; yet enjoyned her self to much private duty, with her children and servants (examining them in the Sermons, and Catechisings, etc.), and with her own soul, that oftentimes the day was too short for her ; and then I have known her rise two or three howrs before day, on the Monday, to supply what was left undone, the day before.

‘ To dispose her self the better for the religious keeping of the Lord’s day (as wel as for other spiritual ends) I presume it was, that she so solemnly fasted every Saturday ; that day she sequestred herself from company, and from worldly employment, and came seldom out of her Closet, til towards evening, and then the Chaplain must double the sacrifice ; praiers she had and Catechizing both.

‘ And the other Holy days of the Church she

punctually observed : and when the publick duties were performed by the Congregation, on those days she released her servants to their recreations, and to their particular Occasions, saying, “ These days are yours, and as due to you, as ordinary days to my employments ; and I wil not be unjust to encroach upon your severals,¹ by expecting any work from you.”

‘ And on these Holy days she rejoyced much, at the advantage she gained, of going to her poor unlearned neighbors with her Book ; “ Now their plow and their wheel (said she) stands stil ; and they are at good leisure, to hear some good lessons read to them.”

‘ And her strictness was exemplary in keeping the fasts of the Church, and such days as were appointed for Solemn humiliation ; yong and old, noble, and mean, free and bond, in her family, must observe them duly : the Ninivites were her patern, both for outward and inward humiliation.

‘ And since our calamities increased upon us, she

¹ ‘ Severals ’ : a word which has fallen out of use since the enclosing of the country. ‘ While the country was for the most part laid out in commons, it was applied to the portion set apart for different owners of common rights, for growing their private crops, the rest being pasture for the parish herds ’ (Teale).

often wished, that lawful authority could vote it fit, that not only the second Fridays, but also the last Wednesdays in every Month, should be kept solemnly throughout the land ; that our Fasts were doubled as well as our troubles.

‘ And her care to prepare her self for the receiving of the holy Sacrament, of our most blessed Lord’s Supper, was most commendable, and most punctual : oftentimes scruples and fears arose in her, tending to keep her back from that heavenly banquet ; and she (having upon examinations of them, reason enough (as we thought) to conclude, that they were temptations from the Devil, whom she perceived labouring amain, to deprive her of that strength and comfort, which she hoped to receive from that sacred ordinance) neglected them all and presented her self, with an humble and trembling heart, at that blessed Sacrament, and these fears and scruples in her, occasioned this peremptory resolution from her, that she would not (by God’s help) thenceforth omit any opportunity of communicating : Thus while the Devil is undermining to weaken her, she is countermining to strengthen herself more against him ; which resolution she constantly kept at home, and (I am told) at Oxford, and London too ; The first inquiry

almost after her journey thither, was, where, and when is there a Communion ? And sometimes she would go to the other end of the City for it.

‘ At home her Servants were all moved to accompany her to the Sacrament, and they who were prevailed with, gave up their names to her, two or three days before ; and from thence, she applied her self to the instructing of them ; and she knew wel, how to administer, to every one their particular portion ; and several exhortations she had for several persons whom she had power over.

‘ Yet she trusted not in her own instructions of them, but desired the Chaplain’s help also to examine them, and to instruct them farther ; and her care was so to order her domestical occasions, that all those Servants, who were to receive the Sacrament, should have the day before it free from their ordinary work, that they might have better leisure for that spiritual work of preparing themselves for that Sacrament.

‘ And after the holy Sacrament, she called them together againe, and gave them such exhortations as were proper for them.

‘ And this very care and piety in family duties was so highly esteemed of in Abraham, that God made him one of His privie councill (as I may so

say), for that alone (Gen. 18. 17). And might not the singular wisdom and deep knowledge of divine counsels, and heavenly mysteries, which this daughter of Abraham had, be a reward of that care to instruct her Children, and household in the ways of God ?

‘ Yet while she is thus religiously and piously employed in this good proficiency, and far progress, going on from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue ; God hath a further designe upon her, another affliction to quicken her yet more.

‘ Her young and most dear son Lorenzo (whom God had endowed with the choicest of natural abilities, and to whom her affections were most tender, by reason of those fair blossoms of piety, she perceived in him) God takes away from her. This added to her former troubles, of the loss of her Husband, of her crosses in the world, and of her spirituall afflictions (which came often upon her) makes the burthen most heavy ; she was bruised with afflictions before, but now she fears being ground to powder.

Extract from Letter 6.

‘ I peruse your directions daily, for I am still in my disconsolate condition, my dryness, my dryness, woe is me ! I cannot dissemble it. Those

Comforts have held up my weary hands, in prayer they have strengthened my feeble knees ; in the publike Congregation, in my private closet, meditating in the field and on my bed, at all times and upon all occasions they have been my companions and my supporters also. They have made me more forward in Christian duties, more cheerful in them, and more plentiful of them, than otherwise I fear I should have been ; but now they have all forsaken me, and I am left weak.'

' Now she weeps and mourns all the day long, and at night also waters her couch with teares ; and weeping, saith, " Ah ! this immoderate sorrow must be repented of, these tears wept over again : " and this quick sense of displeasing God, by this deep grief, soon allayed the vehemency of it. And now she retires herself to listen, what the Lord God said unto her, in this louder call of affliction ; and she seems to be prompted, that she was not yet weaned enough from the things of this world, and that it is expedient for her, that some of those worldly comforts she most delighted in, should be taken away from her, that her conversation may be yet more spiritual, and heavenly, and therefor this affliction seemed to call her to a greater mortification to the world, and to a near conformation to Christ her Lord.

' Yet stil her sorrow for her son is somewhat exorbitant (she fears), and therefore she goes to her ghostly Physitian again, and acquaints him with the violence of those fits of sorrow, which of late seized upon her, for the death of her Son ; and he with his medicinal counsell and direction, by God's help, cured this her distemper¹ ; and antidotes he prescribed too, to prevent a relapse into this malady of excessive grief.

Extract from Answer to Letter 3.

' Devotion doth not consist in these outward and sensible consolations, but in a steady, active will and purpose to conform ourselves inwardly and outwardly to the holy pleasure and commands of God, and as occasion is given, executing the will of God, and obeying His Laws ; This, this is pure Devotion.'

Extract from Answer to Letter 6.

' There goes alway along with these our Consolations, self-love, and sometime too much of it too ; It will concern us therefore to moderate it ; to that purpose, when we propose to ourselves the exercise of any duties, or the practice of any Christian

¹ The Chaplain's counsel in 'desertion' follows the highest and severest method of the devout life. His chief points are absolute and *wilful* faith and obedience, and entire disinterestedness in the service of God. Cp. St. F. de Sales' 'Devout Life,' Part IV.

virtues, our own interest, Pleasure, or advantage (spiritual though they be) must be the least things we aim at, lest self-respects blemish all. And thus (though in the depth of desertion) our love is more commendable, and those duties and virtues more acceptable to God, for Whose sake wholly we perform them, than those exercises and duties we formerly had so much comfort in ; and upon this reason I still advise you, not to set too high an esteem upon these Consolations, your own delights.'

' Now she confesses that this very affliction was most fit for her, and that it would prove most behoofful to her, and therefore she labors to put on joy instead of sorrow, and comfort instead of mourning, and returning home with perfect cheerfulness, every one there observed a most notable, though sodaine change in her ; sad Hanna's countenance and conversation not more visibly changed upon the good words of Eli the Prophet, to her, concerning the Samuel she should obtain, then hers now is, after the loss of one.

' Thus God made the medicine most sovereign to her, and the antidote too ; for I verily believe she never after felt any fit of that her disease ; and though she wept often for her tears so profusely spent formerly upon her Son's hearse, yet after this, not a tear more shed over it.

‘ And with this extraordinary cheerfulness she takes up a most firm resolution of a further progress in holiness and piety, and addresses herself to run these later stages of her Christian race, with greater speed, than she had shewed in any of the former ; and thereupon she begins with a most diligent endeavour to conform her life exactly, and universally to the most holy wil of God.

‘ But the Devil, who before envied her beginning, and her proficiency much more, is now most violent to hinder her perfection ; and therefor upon this her renued purpose of more exact obedience, presently assaults her with fiercenesse and rage, strongly tempting her, to think that she had deceived her self all this while, and that she had mocked God with a counterfeit repentance, which was no way acceptable to Him.

‘ And an Argument was brought to this purpose, which was so fully suitable to the tendernesse of her own spirit, that it is hard to say, whence it proceeded.

‘ And this it was ; my grief for my sins hath not been so vehement, as that, the other day, for the death of my Son ; I wept not so bitterly for them, as I did for that ; and therefore, that my repentance is not acceptable ; you may read the

argument further pressed against her self, in the Letters annexed.

Extract from Letter 7.

‘ The other day, while I was judging myself for my sins, an allegation was cast in against my Repentance also, and that was accused of insincerity and hypocrisy ; and proof was brought in of it : My grief and sorrow for my sins was compared with my sorrow for other things ; the small bottle of my penitential tears was brought forth and set by the bottle of my tears for worldly crosses ; and it appeared how enlarged I had been in these, and how straitened in those ; that I have wept more for the loss of a friend, or of a pension for some years, than for the loss of my Lord God. . . . Upon this, how heavy and sad my guilty soul is cannot be expressed.’

! Extract from Letter 9.

‘ My sins, which were removed from me as far as the East is from the West, are now met together again, and set in order before me ; and they which were as white as snow or wool, are now crimson and scarlet again. Yea, my Saviour and Redeemer, Who was my Surety, and cancelled the bond of handwriting which was against me, is now become an incensed creditor against me. Lord, if I could believe in Him, He would quit me and set me free again ; Oh, help Thou mine unbelief ! and though I am weak in faith, make me faithful in weakness.

And yet my hope perisheth also (Lam. 3. 18). I was wont when I could not rejoice in things enjoyed, yet somewhat to comfort myself in things promised, but now things past, and present, and to come, are all against me, and fear is on every side.'

The Chaplain answered :

'I think that the Lord inflicts not, only suffers this against you ; that it is the Devil who thus buffets you, and that these are his fierce assaults and vehement temptations. And if so, as before you were conformed to our blessed Saviour in desertion of comfort, so now you fill up that conformity to Him, by enduring also this infliction of temptations. . . . And if our Head and our fellow-members suffered these very afflictions, I pray think it not strange concerning this fiery trial : especially considering that this conformity to Christ's sufferings will work out for you a conformity to Him in glory.'

'And in this anguish of spirit, she hastens to her learned friend againe, and begs counsel and direction from him, and after devout Prayers and holy Conferences, received full comfort and thorough satisfaction, and returns home now as visibly lifted up from the deep pit of anguish, and disquiet of spirit, as she was the other day, from the valley of sorrow : and with tranquillity of mind, and joy of heart, shews to her friends, both how she sunk,

and how she was raised again ; as you may read further in the annexed Letters.

Extract from Letter 10.

‘ I return you many thanks for your letters of ghostly direction and comfort, and for your Prayers for me, and the more heartily because they prove so behoofful and advantageous to me ; The floods of afflictions and the waves of terrors beat vehemently upon my soul, but the Lord, Who sitteth above the water-floods, hath supported me, and I have now seen the wonders of God in the Deep. . . . I have found Him Whom I sought, the love of my Soul, and the joy of mine Heart, my God and my Lord. Now I enjoy His Presence, I feel His Influence, and the light of His Countenance also shines upon me. . . . Surely, Sir, my sufferings compared with the Age of my sinfulness, but especially with the eternity of Comforts which I shall enjoy, were but for a moment, a very short moment, but the twinkling of an Eye : And now my joys return. . . . And when I am filled with the comforts of God, my heart dilates itself further by looking upon the joys of heaven ; for if there be such joys during the seedtime, how infinite is the joy of harvest ?

‘ Praised be the Lord Who hath heard my complaint and answered my prayer, and that with advantage. I asked my former comforts, and He fills me with them far more than before ; He hath been more bountiful to me, than I dared presume to ask. Now I perceive it was so far from being prejudicial

to me, that it was most expedient for me, that Christ should go away from me, with these His Consolations, for now He hath sent the Holy Ghost the Comforter down into my soul, with far greater delights, and with more Heavenly joy, than ever heretofore ; and if barrenness be so fruitful, and yields such a plentiful harvest, oh my soul be thou never hereafter troubled at it.'

' And now having by the help of her God leapt over this wall, and overcome this difficulty, with much cheerfulness of spirit she enters upon the practise of what she had last resolved on.

Extract from Letter II.

' I still abound with these consolations, and I cannot mistrust them to come from any other fountain than from heaven ; my sensitive faculties have some share in outward consolations, but my rational faculties overflow with them ; and therefore I bless God, the Author of these and of all true comforts. And these still increase in me ; the oil of my former joy was as that in the widow's little cruse ; but now I have such store that (with the other widow) I want vessels to hold it.

' Oft-times I cry out (with the holy man I read of): "*Sufficit, Domine, sufficit*"—It is enough, Lord, it is enough, I am full of joy, brim-full, and can hold no more.'

' This opposition, though it stayed her awhile, yet set an edge upon her resolution, and she soon

recovered that whetting time. And she begins by a most sharp mortification, to obey the call of her last Affliction.

‘ The vanity of apparel and dresses she had cut off long before ; and after her Husband’s death, the richness of them too. These (and her looking-glasses with the women in the law, Exod. 38. 8) she had laid by, for the service of the Tabernacle : what she spared in these, she bestowed upon the poor Members of Christ, and now she begins to cut off all worldly pomp also.

‘ In her House, in her Retinue, and at her Table, and otherwise, she denies herself that state (which her quality might have excused) that (with Dorcas the Widow) she might be full of good works ; and more delight she takes to see her Revenues now spent among a crowd of Almes-men and women at her dore, then by a throng of Servants in her house ; it was a greater joy to her that she could maintain poor children at their Books, and their work, then to have Pages and Gentlewomen for her Attendants : These expences she knew would be better allowed, in her Bill of Accounts, at the general Audit, then those other ; it was her pomp and joy to mortifie all useless pomp of State, and all delight in Courtly vanities.

‘ And now her anger too (which was crushed before) must be wholly subdued ; and to that purpose she solicitously avoids all enquiries ; and all discourse which she feared would provoke her to immoderate anger ; and when she feels it struggling to arise in her, then presently (either by silence, or by diverting to another matter) she labours to stifle it.

‘ And while she is suppressing the sinfulness of this passion, she undertakes also, that most difficult task of taming the tongue : And as it is necessary with unruly beasts, she begins roughly with it, ties it up, with a most strong resolution, and scarce suffers it to speak, lest she should offend with her tongue : thus for some while it was straightened, and then she loosed it a little with these two cautions.

‘ First, that it should never speak evil of any man, though truly, but only upon a designe of charity, to reclaim him from that evil : And because it is not ordinary to reclaim any vicious person, in his absence, therefore her charge is peremptory to her tongue, That it never should speak evil of any man, were he most notoriously vicious, if he were absent, and not like to be amended by it : A strict rule this, yet verily I perswade my self,

that for a long time before her death, she most punctually observed it ; she accounted it a crime to speak evil falsly of any man ; and it went for a slander with her (as wel it might) to speak evil truly of any one, unless it were in love.

‘ The second caution her tongue had, was that, as much as possible, it should keep in every idle word, and speak out only that which was to edification.

‘ The Thessalonians were famous for speaking to the edification one of another (1 Thes. 5. 11), and this Thessalonian language our good Lady studied, with as much diligence and earnestness, as we ordinarily study a deep science, or a gainful mystery : and now she is very slow to speak (as the Apostle exhorts) and, where she cannot rule the discourse to edification, she sits silent, and refrains even from good words, though it be pain and grief to her.

‘ And of late she distinguisht between civil, and spiritual edification, and scarcely allowed herself discourses for civil edification of her friends, or neighbors in worldly matters : Spiritual edification in heavenly things was all her aim.

‘ And her care was the same in writing, as in speaking ; not a vain, not an idle word must slip

from her pen ; she thought not her soul clean, if there were such a blot in her paper. In her Letters, no favour of complement at all, and she judged her self guilty of a trespass, if she subscribed her self, Your servant, to whom she was not really so.

‘ And for that other temperance in diet, as well as in speech, she was very eminent. A small dosis, of meat or drink, and of sleep, and ease, sufficed her.

‘ In fastings often, in watching often ; and temperate she was, in an high degree, continually. And these were sure means for the mortification of her appetites ; and as far from daintiness as from intemperance, and both that, and this, not only in a care of her health, and in respect of God’s commandment, but also out of a consciousness (as she would now and then intimate) that she was unworthy to enjoy any thing, for quantity or quality above the meanest in the Parish.

‘ And together with these mortifications of her affections to honor and state ; and of her appetites ; she now also severely undertakes the mortification of her natural Affection to her Children and Friends, and keeps that from its wonted exorbitancy.

Extract from Letter 5.

‘ If I could abridge myself a little more of that delight I take in the study of History, Philosophy, and the like ; If I could abate some little of that comfort I solace myself with, in friends and children ; if I could be a little more straitened in these worldly comforts, I should well hope to be enlarged again in these spiritual comforts.’

‘ It sounded very harshly, to some of her dearest friends, when she said, “ Oh love me not, I pray, too much !” until she added, “ And God grant, I never love my friends too much hereafter, that hath cost me dear, and my heart hath smarted sore with grief for it already :” And now her will and understanding must be henceforth more mortified than formerly ; she had resigned them before to God’s will, and she renues that resignation daily, and most freely submits herself in everything, not only to God’s will, but also to his wisdom : “ And whatever comes upon me (said she) I will bear it patiently, because by God’s will it comes ; yea, I will bear it cheerfully, because by God’s wisdom it is thus ordered, and it will work (as all things else) for mine advantage.”

Compare the Chaplain’s answer to Letter 8 :

‘ Consider, I pray, there are other graces to grow in you besides peace and joy ; and though the light of God’s countenance, those sunshiny days, might ripen them most, yet this present cloudy weather may advantage your growth in humility and mourning and self-denial ; and if there be a growth downward in these, though you perceive no growth upward in the other, yet are you increasing in holiness.’

‘ And upon this reason she was wont to account the death of her Husband, and of her Son, as extraordinary perquisites and advantages to her ; “ and therefore I should offend not only against free obedience and submission, but also against common prudence (said she) if I should wish my condition otherwise, then now it is ; I cannot wish anything so gainfull and prosperous to me, as this, which my heavenly Father in his wisdom hath ordered for me.”

‘ And as in suffering, so in doing, she resigns up her self wholly, and resolves (by the grace of God) to do whatsoever is her duty in everything, and therefore she proposes henceforth to deliberate of nothing, but what is her duty, in this, or that particular ; and without further pause goe about it.

‘ When matters of difficulty came, she usually consulted with the most learned and pious Divines

she could meet with, to learn what was her duty therein ; she trusted not her own judgement, nor mistrusted theirs ; but presently applied her self to do, as they directed her.

‘ In the Transactions of her worldly affaires, though she foresaw sometimes inconveniences ensuing by following their directions, yet more she feared might otherwise happen, and therefore she would not neglect them. And when the success of any business answered not to her expectation, she seemed not troubled at it ; her Conscience bearing her witness, that she had done what was her duty to doe ; and seeing it was God, who in His wisdom denied her successe, she would still hope, and say, “ Though at this time, this way, this business prospered not, yet at some other time, some other way, it will be successfull unto me. This doing my duty will be some time, or other, some way or other, for mine advantage.”

‘ And these her mortifications were not without a great degree of Sanctification, both in the inward and outward man ; for to these she joyned her former purpose of adorning her soul, more especially with those virtues which our Savior commends, in his Sermon on the Mount ; and now she endeavours to put them in practice more

perfectly, and more exactly then formerly she had done.

‘ And first, mercifulness begins to exceed : she was most liberal before, now she is (considering her Estate brought into a very narrow compass) most bountiful : for whereas before the main of her Revenue was for her own maintenance, the superfluity of it for her charity, now the maine of her Revenues goes abroad for Charity ; the other only is left at home for her maintenance : I have heard her compute, and the remainder after such and such deeds of Charity to be expended quarterly, that small pittance was only it, she accounted hers, and ordered her course of life accordingly ; very well content, though she herself made a shift with Augurs single food and rayment (Prov. 30. 8) that others, who depended on her, should (as the household of Lemuels virtuous woman) be fed and cloathed with double (c. 31. 21).

‘ And with this, her meeknes exceeds also : meeknes was the attire of her soul, before, now it is the Ornament thereof : hath the fulness, and length, and comeliness too, of an Ornament or Robe : And I will say nothing (for I cannot say enough) of the richness, and glory, and beauty of that Robe, a meek and quiet Spirit : now she grows a most

eminent pattern of meeknesse and gentlenesse in every kind, and all that knew her admired and revered her for it.

‘ And her Compassion, which was thought to be with the deepest before, goes deeper now ; she had formerly the heart of a most tender mother, towards every one in distresse, now she put on the heart of God ; and so enlarged she grows in her heart, that she seldome sees, or hears of any object of pity, but it yearns so much within her, as to force tears from her eyes ; And it is hard to say, whether her heart or her Hand (her Compassion or her Charity) contributed most to the comfort of the poor and needy.

‘ This was confined, that at large ; and the publique calamities which her Hand of Charity could not reach, her heart’s Compassion did ; And we, who observed her (when the publique and generall miseries of the Kingdome and Church were the Discourse at Meales) to mingle her Drink with her Teares, cannot but think, that the sadder thoughts of them, in private, made her water her Couch with her Teares.

‘ And now she is almost pined with hunger, and faint with thirst after righteousness ; ever and anon sighing, “ Oh that I could attain unto it ! Oh

that my ways were made so direct !” It was usual for her at night to compose herself to sleep, saying to her woman (not without some joy), “ Well, now I am one day neerer my journey’s end ;” comforting herself, that when her body should sleep in the bed of her grave, then the days of sin should be accomplished, and then she should be perfect, as her heavenly Father is perfect.

‘ Particularly, her hunger and thirst after justice was most commendable, that judgement might run down as a stream, and righteousness like a mighty river : And for justice in her own affaires, there lives not (I believe) any one, more punctual and exact than she was. She perused a learned and strict Treatise of justice, and made those rules her standard, practising them most precisely : And in more perplexed and difficult cases she would send to some Divines (of whose piety and fervor she had a good opinion) and desire them to pray (as she her self did) that she might be most just in them, neither swerving to the left, nor to the right hand.

‘ In her absence from home, the Sutlers of the Army came to her House, and took provision, paying for every particular the highest price ; which, when her Servant accounted to her again, she com-

puted exactly, what the particulars cost her ; and then sent solicitously up and down the Army to find out the Sutlers, and to restore the overplus, which she thought not just to be taken by her : and her hunger and thirst after that justice was not satisfied, til she heard it was so done.

‘ And for engagements descended to her (after care taken to satisfy them with all possible speed) she lamented often with teares that she could not actually discharge them, saying, Though they may consist with justice (2 Kings 4. 1), yet they could not consist with that outward thankfulness which she desired to express.

‘ And for the other points of our Savior’s Sermon, her charity suspected few, judged none of her neighbours ; an Eagle’s ey(e) she had, to espie any good, though but inclinations in them, and with a favorable construction, judged the best of what she heard, or saw in them : yet a Mole’s eye, to espie the evil, though acts in her brethren ; a mote of goodness could not escape her sight ; but it must be a beam of evil, her eye would take notice of : and her slowness to believe miscarriages in any one, drave all talebearers from her : yet when faults were evident (in such as she had charge over) she would reprove with a great deal of power.

‘ She was most respective to her superiors ; and most courteous and affable towards inferiors ; And very cautious lest she should give offence to one or other, either in word or gesture ; and as cautious too, lest any of them should take offence at any speech, or look of hers, towards them ; “ for either way (said she), in offences given or taken, God is offended ; ” And her humility in begging forgiveness from others, was most singular : Of late, your Ladyship knows, she seldome slept, til she had asked forgiveness as well as blessing from you ; if she had offended you, she thought your pardon necessary ; if not, it was no cumbrance, to have supernumerary pardons from you, lying by her.

‘ But to see this honourable Lady begging forgiveness from her inferiors and servants (as she often did) for her angry words to them, or her chiding frowns upon them, was that, which put us all to shame, and to astonishment ; now and then, when she had expressed no anger, outwardly, yet their pardon she would desire, because, said she, “ somewhat I felt within my self, too like anger against you, though I suppressed it as soon as I could.”

‘ More than once, or twice of late, she brought her gift to the Altar (was in her Closet on her knees

towards Prayer), and there she remembred that her Brother might possibly have somewhat against her (for such a word, or such a look, or a neglective silence a little before), and she left her gift at the Altar, and went, and was reconciled (asked pardon), and then came and offered : so that her chief care was still, to lift up in Prayer pure hands, without wrath ; If there were any wrath in her against others, or any, in others against her, she would have it allayed, before she offered her gift of Prayer.

‘ And though all these graces and virtues (by God’s help) did thus increase in her, yet a true poverty of spirit increased also in her.

Compare the Chaplain’s reply to Letter II :

‘ Though these consolations of yours are (as you hope) from the Holy Spirit (Who giveth every good thing plenteously), yet there may be too much delight taken in them ; and temptation there may come to rest in them, to think yourself not only the more happy but also the more holy, and the more fervent for them ; yea, and holy enough with them ; But labour I pray to abound as with comfort so in every good work, knowing that the more comfort you receive, the more holiness you must return.’

‘ The more Holy, the more Pious she was, the more humbly she walked with God : In her greatest

abundance she complained most of spiritual wants. Sure the bright lustre of her virtue gave her an advantage, to espie many corruptions in her self, which she could not before ; and these she lamented more sadly, now, then heretofore.

‘ And in these duties of praier, she advanced forward too. Now, her Nursery must have an Oratory annexed to it ; and her Children¹ their private Devotions ; they are appointed by her, to read Morning and Evening Prayers, and Lessons at their rising up, and at their lying down : and their spare minutes being destined as hers also were to conning of Psalmes without book ; they open the day with one of the seven Eucharistical Psalms (for thanksgiving to God, for renewing his loving kindnes to them that Morning), and they shut up the day, with one of the 7 Penitential Psalms (praying for pardon of the offences of the day) ; this care she

¹ She had three sons, Lucius, Henry, and Lorenzo. Lorenzo died in November, 1645. The eldest was entered at Christchurch in Lent term, 1646-1647, but soon afterwards went abroad with his tutor, Maplet. It is possible that grief for his mother had weakened his health, for he died in the same year at Montpelier. Henry succeeded to the title and estates, but is chiefly remarkable for the tradition that he sold his father's library for a horse and mare. He had only one child, at whose death the direct line ceased, before the end of the seventeenth century.

took to season her Children's affections, and memories with good things ; and now she trains them up also, to those virtues commended in our Savior's Sermon, and an explication of them, she directs, should be annexed to their first Catechism.

‘ And for the Church prayers in her house, there was of late some exceptions against continuing that practice ; and some danger the Exceptors apprehended, likely to have ensued upon it :¹ Hereupon the Book of Martyrs was brought, and the story of the Lady Knevit in Norfolke, in the time of Queen Mary was publikly read, which in short is this : “ A persecuted Protestant Minister, being in her house, reads the Morning and Evening Prayer of King Edward the sixt his Service-book (the same with our Service-book) constantly in her family, though there was an Act of Parliament against it. Hereupon the holy Lady is threatened to be punished for it ; she goes on notwithstanding, in that course of piety, promising to welcome the punishment, when ere it came ; and though many resorted to her house, who had disaffection enough to her piety, and particularly to that Form of prayer, yet they commonly kneeled down, and joyned in

¹ The use of the Prayer Book was forbidden by Parliament in 1645.

prayers with her ; God would not suffer their hands to punish, nor their mouths to speak against her, for it."

' And now, when every passage in this story was so readily applicable, to this our pious Lady also, she wanted not an answer for the Objectors, nor courage to go on in her wonted course : and the event was most particularly according to the president ; for though complaints were made, and threats sent to us ; and many quartered upon her, who liked not our Form of Prayer, and had power to suppress it, yet God suffered them not to execute that their power upon us. And, Madame, if the Lady Knevit was thought fit to be Chronicled (amongst the Martyrs and Confessors) for this alone, I pray let not this of our Lady be forgotten : And I shall presume that your Ladyship, and every one who considers these, and such like examples, will hazard any thing, rather than alter your course of piety, and constant use of our sacred Liturgy.

' And she was as constant, and as resolute for her other howrs of Prayer and Meditation. The entertainments of honourable persons, or the haste of necessary business, should not excuse her from these other Devotions ; In her deepest griefs and disturbances, in her highest comforts, and gratula-

tions, she was most constant at them : and though she could not, at these times, discharge those duties at her ordinary howrs, yet her eyes were not suffered to sleep, til she had gone through with them ; when she must lose her sleep, or God this his service, she readily resolved, which was fittest of the two.

‘ Her last work, every Evening, was to review with some diligence all the works of that day, her thoughts, words, and deeds ; what in this room, what in that ; what good she had done, what evil she had committed ; what opportunities of benefiting others, she had embraced, or neglected ; and what comforts and blessings she had that day received : and after this examination, giving thanks, and begging pardon, in every particular, as occasion required, having communed with her own heart, in her bed-chamber, she was still.

‘ Thus she was a very good proficient in these several points of our Savior’s Sermon, went on from one degree to another, in most of them. Faith, and judgement (the weightier matters of the law, the chief virtues) she was most eminent in ; and for tything of mint and cummin (the lesser virtues) she would not leave them undone.

‘ She thought not all the laws of God performed,

If any laws of the King were neglected ; and therefore she was wont earnestly to presse obedience to all things which the laws of the Realm require ; even to penal laws against shooting and hunting, and the like ; and would not suffer any of hers to transgresse, in these lesser matters : Severely (though judiciously, and truly enough) affirming, “ That the Lawgivers made their penal laws, for obedience, not for Mulct ; and their chief and first intention was, that their laws should be observed, not that the offender should be punished.”

‘ And having thus far improved her self (by the grace of God) in an holy and spirituall life, she now labors what she can, to improve others also ; and now she is strong, to strengthen her brethren.

‘ A Covenant she enters into with her acquaintance, especially those with whom she frequently conversed, that they should take liberty to reprove whatsoever they saw amisse in her : and also to give her liberty to deal so with them ; saying to them “ there is no friendship without this ; and if you suffer me to be undone for ever ; or I you ; how are we friends ?”

‘ There was near acquaintance between her, and

some strict Papists,¹ and as near between her, and some stricter Non-conformists ; and she not only warily avoided the Superstition of the One, and the Nonconformity of the Other, but also earnestly laboured to reduce the One and the Other from their Erroneous ways ; And not without happy Successe. I could instance in some (and perhaps your Ladiship can instance in more) who now are firme to the Tenets and Practices of our Church of England whom she (principally) by her Arguments and Endeavours gained from Rome and from Geneva.

‘ But for improving her nearer Acquaintance it was her constant Labour.

‘ That counsel which she gave to young Mothers, not to be fond² of their Children or Husbands, came most properly and most pathetically from her. “ Oh, I have had my portion (said she) of these very comforts, with the first ; no one woman more ; but there is no lasting nor true pleasure in them : There is no real comfort from any espousals, but from those to Christ ;” this (I say) came most

¹ Her husband’s mother and sisters and brother had all become Roman Catholics. They stayed some time at Great Tew.

² Fond = excessively affectionate, or foolishly loving. In theology, ‘ inordinate affection.’

fitly from her, here she had tripped once, and again, and now she fore-warns others of the dangers, lest they should stumble at it.

‘ The benefit she had received from her childhood, by pious and learned Divines, makes her solicitous to provide such for her neighbours ; and til they were acquainted (as wel as she) with the conversations of the people, she would, some way or other, hint unto them, what virtues it would be proper to commend in their Sermons, and Discourses to the Parish ; and for catechizing the young, and for visiting the sick, she her self took a special regard, as if the cure had depended more upon the Patroness, then upon her Clerk.

‘ And the remembrance of those heavenly comforts, she frequently had, while she played upon David’s harp, set her on to commend those Psalms, for daily and howrly devotions to all.

‘ Yet some discord she found of late, even from that harp ; observing such Psalms of David, wherein he (by his Prophetical spirit, or in zeal for divine justice, upon the publick enemies of God) pronounces curses, spitefully picked out and maliciously applyed, both in private families, and publick Congregations to our own enemies ; This she often lamented as a most notorious profanation of the

holy Book of Psalms, and as an evident breach of charity : “ Oh, that sweetest harp sounds most harshly, unless it be touched with pure hands, without wrath : Therefore (said she) the people must be often warned (in these days of contention and opposition) to sing David’s Psalms with David’s spirit : And when cursing of enemies came in, to reflect (as David oft did) upon the lusts and corruption of our hearts ; and then the 109 Psalm (a common curse among the Hebrews) be upon these our vilest enemies, and most deadly foes, little enough.”

‘ Neither was her care of improving others confined to the present age ; designs and projects she had also for posterity ; for setting up schools, and manufacture trades in the Parish ; to shut out (by those engines) for ever, ignorance, idleness, and want.

‘ But that magnificent, and most religious contrivement, that there might be places for the education of young Gentlewomen, and for retirement of Widows (as Colleges and the Inns of Court and Chancery are for men), in several parts of the Kingdom, This, was much in her thoughts ; hoping thereby that learning and religion might flourish more in her own Sex, then heretofore, having such

opportunities to serve the Lord, without distraction : A project this adequate to the wisdom, and piety, of this Mother in Israel ; and not beyond the power, and interest, she had with great ones, to have effected it.

‘ But these evil times disabled her quite, and discouraged her somewhat, from attempting much, in these her designs, she returns therefore to improve her self with the greatest vigor ; If her virtue cannot shine out over all the Kingdome, it shall shine and burn so much the more within her own soul ; and now she grows so strict to her self, and so severe in examining her own heart, that, with holy Job, she fears all her workes. She had always a tender conscience ; but now that exceeds too, in quickness, and tenderness ; and this holy fear began at last to breed in her many doubtings and scruples.

Extract from Letter II.

‘ Though in matters of faith (I bless God) I waver not, yet in matters of fact, both divine and civil, spiritual and temporal, many doubts and scruples (I know not what to call them) arise in me daily. . . . Now, Sir, if these motions be from the Spirit of God in me, I must hearken what the Lord God saith to my soul ; at my utmost peril it is, if I receive not and cherish not these motions ; and if they be doubts I raise of myself, they are not to be

neglected, there is danger (my books tell me) in that ; but if they be scruples, heeding them is danger, so there is danger on every side.'

The Chaplain answered :

'I much commend that universal care you have of all your ways. . . . If we . . . performed all we ought as well as God's grace did, then enable us, yet are we unprofitable servants, and thereupon the Apostle chargeth us to pass all the time of our sojourning here in fear. This fear will advance our awe and reverence to God ; it will quicken us in His service, and make us more diligent ; and it will truly humble us in and after all our performances.

'And yet I must tell you, this fear is very prone to be extravagant, and to run out into vain doubts and scruples ; and our task is to keep it and to moderate it ; not to cast it off, nor yet to let it run out. If we keep this fear within its bounds and due limits, it will bring forth these effects of reverence and diligence and humility.'

'And in these doubtings and fears, she seldom trusted her own judgement, but advised with learned Divines ; and when she met with anyone of learning and piety, she proposes her Cases, and seeks Resolves.

'And upon these fears she would dispute against her self very sharply ; scarce omitting any objection material, nor accepting any answer, which was not fully satisfactory ; and when she was once

clearly resolved, she cheerfully submitted, and ordered her future practice accordingly.

‘ And it is very observable, how this holy fear (as her other virtues), extended it self also, not only to greater matters, but also to lesser, almost to all : such was her love to God, and her reverential awe of His Majesty, that she feared to offend him, in the least particular : “ If it be but a mote, may it not grow (said she) to a beam in mine eye ?”

‘ And such zealous Anxieties, as these, such holy fears of displeasing God in any, the least thing, are strong arguments of most ardent love to God ; and of most passionate desires to please him ; oh how greedily did she aspire after perfection, while she thus solicitously fears the least imperfection !

‘ And if some of these Scruples proceeded from Her own Carnal Reason, or from Satan (to disquiet and Disturbe Her), yet even that Poyson, she turned into Honey, taking Occasion from those very Scruples, to be more exact afterward in her Life.

‘ And now in the very last stage of her Christian race, she growes so exact, that all time seems tedious to her, which tends not to Heaven ; and thereupon she now resolves, to get loose from the multitude of her worldly employments ; and provides to remove from her stately mansion, to a

little house neer adjoining ; and in that house and garden, with a book, and a wheel, and a maid or two, to retire her self from worldly businesse, and unnecessary visits, and so spend her whole time ; and she took as great delight in projecting this humiliation and privacy, as others do, in being advanced to publick honours, and state employments.

‘ Now towards the end of her race, all her strength seems weakness, and her quickest speed seems slothfulness ; Therefore at Christmas last, she prepared to be at the holy Communion, with the first ; and after that, her soul stil wanting the strength and vigor it aimed at, she thinks of coming with the last too, the next Lord’s day : But he, who hath let, will let ; for that very morning she had a very sore conflict, and great anguish in spirit : one while her unworthiness, another while her dulness, and driness deterred her from approaching to the holy Sacrament ; and then the singularity and unaccustomedness of receiving so often, dissuaded her ; after an hour or two, some reason she found to presume this might be from the Devil, her grand enemy ; (who was unwilling that the Castle which he now besieged, should be double-walled against him) and thereupon she con-

tinues resolution, and came to the blessed Sacrament, that second day also, and received with it much comfort and peace.

‘ And not many days after, the Devil brought his strongest batteries, and labour’d to take this castle by storm ; Temptations again she had, and those vehement and fierce, to suspect her whole course of life, as so full of weakness at best, and oftentimes so full of gross corruptions ; Her faith so weak, her repentance so faint, that God would not accept of her : But her shield of Faith in Christ’s merits, soon repelled these darts, and her wonted Sanctuary of prayer secured her presently from this storm of temptation.

Compare the chaplain’s answer to Letter 7 :

‘ Whether you should take part with Fear or Hope, you yourself must resolve ; yet somewhat I shall say, concerning the fears which arise in you, that you are not justified before God nor reconciled to Him.

‘ It is good to fear alway ; it keeps us low, lest pride enter ; and it keeps us active, lest sloth seize upon us ; and so we humbly labour to make our Calling and Election sure ; and when I sadly consider how many miscarry through Spiritual security, not at all suffering themselves to mistrust their condition towards God, I am not forward to cast out fear : Yet there is torment in fear, and a

firm hope well grounded (if it ejects not fear itself) will wholly allay the torment of it.

‘Whether your Faith and Repentance were as they ought to be, is between God and your own soul ; but if your faith were lively, with love and trust in God, and your repentance unfeigned, assure yourself it was no other Spirit but the Holy Spirit of God (Who can neither deceive nor be deceived) Who said unto your soul, *Christus est justitia tua, et salus tua* ; Christ is thy justification and thy salvation.’

‘And in peace and tranquillity of mind, her piety, and zeal of Justice, hurry her to London (in the bitterest season of this winter) to take order for the discharge of some engagements : this she knew was her duty, and that she her self should take that journey, was conceived the necessary means to performe that duty, and therefore she ventures upon it, and leaves the success to God.

‘There, at London, she strengthens her self yet more, for the final period of her race, by receiving the holy Sacrament again : But alas, Madam, Though her inward strength encreases, her outward strength decays, and her weak consumptive body, by a cold there taken, grows weaker : yet thence she came homeward, and at Oxford, her cough and cold very much encreasing, she with most earnest prayers, and holy meditations (which

a pious and learned Divine suggested to her) prepares her self for death.

‘ After a while, they, who were about her, fearing the pangs of death to be upon her, began to weep and lament ; the whole company grew sad and heavy ; she only continued in her former condition, not at all sorrowful, nor affrighted by these messengers of death : Then the Physitian comming, and upon consideration, saying, “ Here is no signe of death, nor of much danger ; by Gods help she may recover again ; ” the whole company was very much comforted and cheared ; she only in her former indifferency ; no alteration at all could be perceived in her, as if she had been the only party in the chamber, unconcerned in it ; neither fear of death could grieve, nor trouble her, nor hopes of life and health rejoyce her ; “ I have wholly resigned up my self to God (said she) and not mine but His will be done ; whether in life or death : ” She was not afraid to live, and still endure the miseries of this life (and ever and anon encounter with Satan too) because she had a powerfull God able to uphold her : nor yet afraid to die, and appear at Gods Judgement seat, because she had a merciful Redeemer, willing to save her.

‘ They who write of perfection, account it an

high degree, to have *Vitam in patientia et mortem in voto*, to be content to live, but desirous to die ; yet surely, this here, *In aequilibrio ad vitam et ad mortem*, to be wholly indifferent, and to be most equally inclined to either, to desire nothing, to fear nothing, but wholly to resigne our selves to God, accounting that to be the best (whatsoever it is) which He pleases to send, This, this is to be a strong man in Christ ;¹ And this in our most pious Lady, was a very neer approach unto perfection.

‘ It was related for a very great virtue in S. Cyprian, that, *Maluit obsequi praeceptis Christi, quam vel sic coronari*, He had rather live and obey God, then die and reign in glory : But this, to have no propension at all, more to one, then to the other, to be wholly indifferent, to work on still in God’s Vineyard, or to be called up to Heaven, to receive pay, this may be a greater virtue.

Compare the chaplain’s reply to Letter 10 :

‘ I do truly sympathize with you, and rejoyce for the return and increase of your joys ; now you see how good and gracious the Lord is to all them that call upon Him, and wait upon Him patiently,

¹ Compare ‘ *Manchester al Mondo* ’ (published 1638-1639) : ‘ It is a good mind in a man, to be content to dye, and willing to live : But to be willing to dye and content to live, is the mind of a strong Christian.’ (Henry Montague).

according to His promise by the Prophet, Isaiah 54. 7. With great mercies will I visit thee again, though for a small moment I have forsaken thee.

‘Your afflictions were like Job’s, in body, in estate, and in your friends, and in the barrenness of your spirit, and in the terrors of your soul ; and your deliverance is like his also (in these spiritual things) : and as he did, so you have already received double for all your losses ; for a cup of affliction, vessels of joy ; for disconsolate days, months of great delight and comfort.

‘Continue, I pray, your indifferency to abundance or want ; Let not the height of your joys puff you up, nor the depth of desertion cast you down ; or any condition dishearten you in the service of God ; Learn to be as well content to be with Christ on Mount Calvary, sorely suffering, as on Mount Tabor, full of joy and comfort ; And as heretofore Christ was your only hope in your barrenness and sorrow, so let Him be your Rock and your Castle still, and rejoice not so much in your Consolations, as in Him Who is the only true joy and comfort for ever.’

‘And this perfect indifference to do, or suffer Gods will, in life, or death, appearing in this servant of God, was such an act of self-denial, which they, who observed it, in her, could not but set a special character upon, most worthy to be commended to your Ladyship.

‘Thus she was brought from Oxford, home, and

now being far spent, and near her end, she could speak little, yet expressed a great deal of thankfulness to God, who had brought her safe, to die in her own house, among her dearest Friends.

‘ And there she showed those friends a rare pattern of patience in the extremity of her sickness.

‘ But the tranquillity of mind, which she had in these her last daies, was most observable ; that the Devil, who had so often perplexed her, with violent temptations, should now leave her to rest and ease : she was wont to fear his most violent assaults on her deathbed (as his practice commonly is), but now God (it seems) had chained him up, and enabled her (by his grace) to tread Satan under her feet : not a word of complaint, nor the least disturbance, or disquiet, to be perceived by her, which is a sufficient argument to us (who know how open a breast she had, to reveal anything in that kind, especially to Divines, whereof she had now store about her) of her exceeding great quietness, and peace : and this tranquillity of mind, more clearly now appearing at her death, then ordinarily in the time of her health, is a great evidence, to me, of God’s most tender mercy and love towards her, and of some good assurance, in her, of her salvation.

‘ This quiet gave her leave, though now very

faint and weak, to be most vigorous, and most instant at prayers ; she calls for other help, very faintly ; but for praiera, most heartily and often (in those few hours she lived at home), and after the office of the Morning was performed, she gave strict charge, that every one of her family (who could be spared from her) should go to Church and pray for her ; and then in a word of exhortation to them, who stayed by her, saying, “ Fear God, fear God,” she most sweetly spent her last breath ; and so most comfortably yielded up her spirit to him who made it : and was (we doubt not) admitted into Heaven, into the number of the Apostles and Saints of God (on S. Matthias day) there to reign in the glory of God for evermore.

‘ In which moment of her death, there seemed as little outward pain, as inward conflict ; none could perceive either twich, or groan, or gasp, or sigh, onely her spirits failed ; and so she vanished from us, as if God had intended her here, some foretast, not onely of the rest of the soul, but also of the ease of the body, which she should enjoy hereafter in Heaven.

‘ Thus in her youth, she was soon perfected, and in a short time of five and thirty years, she fulfilled a long time.

‘ And having in a most acceptable manner practised the duties of our most blessed Saviors Sermon, she is now (we firmly believe) partaker of the blessedness too of that Sermon ; through Christs mercy, she hath obtained mercy, and enjoyes the vision of God, in the Kingdome of Heaven, where she is most fully satisfied with delight, and comfort, and joy.

‘ There were these, and many other virtues your Ladyship knows, observable in this your most pious Daughter ; but I pretend not to relate all, many I omit, because common to all the servants of God, and many other excellencies also there were in her (I doubt not) which she concealed from her nearest friends ; and indeed, many of these, I have named, she endeavoured studiously to conceal from us, but now, and then, unawares, she discovered them, and so I came acquainted with them.

‘ And now, Madam, you have observed, that the growth of grace, which was most evident and apparent in her, especially these late years (as of corn from a blade to an ear, then to a blossome, and thence towards full maturity and ripenesse), was most of all promoted, by the afflictions, which God sent upon her ; the loss of her dearest friends, and other troubles, were as a shower of rain, to a

crop of corn, on a dry ground ; an evident benefit, and a present improvement by it.

' And was there not then somewhat extraordinary in that dream of hers, soon after her Sons death ? wherein she being much troubled for that loss, a ladder presently appeared, reaching (with that Ladder in Jacob's dream) from earth to heaven ; after the death of her Son, every one of us could sensibly perceive her climbing up higher, and higher every day, in piety, and holiness, till God exalted her, to the top of Jacob's ladder, the height of glory in heaven.

' So may it be with every one, who suffers inward, or outward affliction.

' And now, though all this while, I have been comforting your Ladyship, and wiping the tears from your eyes, yet I have detained you too long (I fear) from improving this affliction sent upon you (the loss of your dearest child) with that hast and greediness you desired, to your spiritual benefit : I shall help you what I can hereafter, by begging in my praiers the strengthening, and establishing grace of God, for you, to bring store of heavenly comfort into your soul, from this your present sorrow.

' And for the further satisfaction of those to

whom you shall please to communicate this relation, I have prefixed a discourse (by way of Letters too) wherein much of a Character of this your Daughter is contained ; It was composed for her, and delivered to her, and left among her Papers (and though upon the transcribing of the Letters I have altered and added somewhat, yet that was according to her desire and the directions I received from herself after her perusall of them) ; and your Ladyship will quickly discern, that many of the objections, and of the answers too, came from her own self, and therefore proper enough, to be joyned with this relation of her Life. That herein I may promote the service of our gracious Lord, and comfort you, or any other of His true servants, is the utmost drift, and most earnest prayer, of him, who is

‘ Your servant in Christ Jesus,

‘ I. D.

‘ *April 15, 1647.*’

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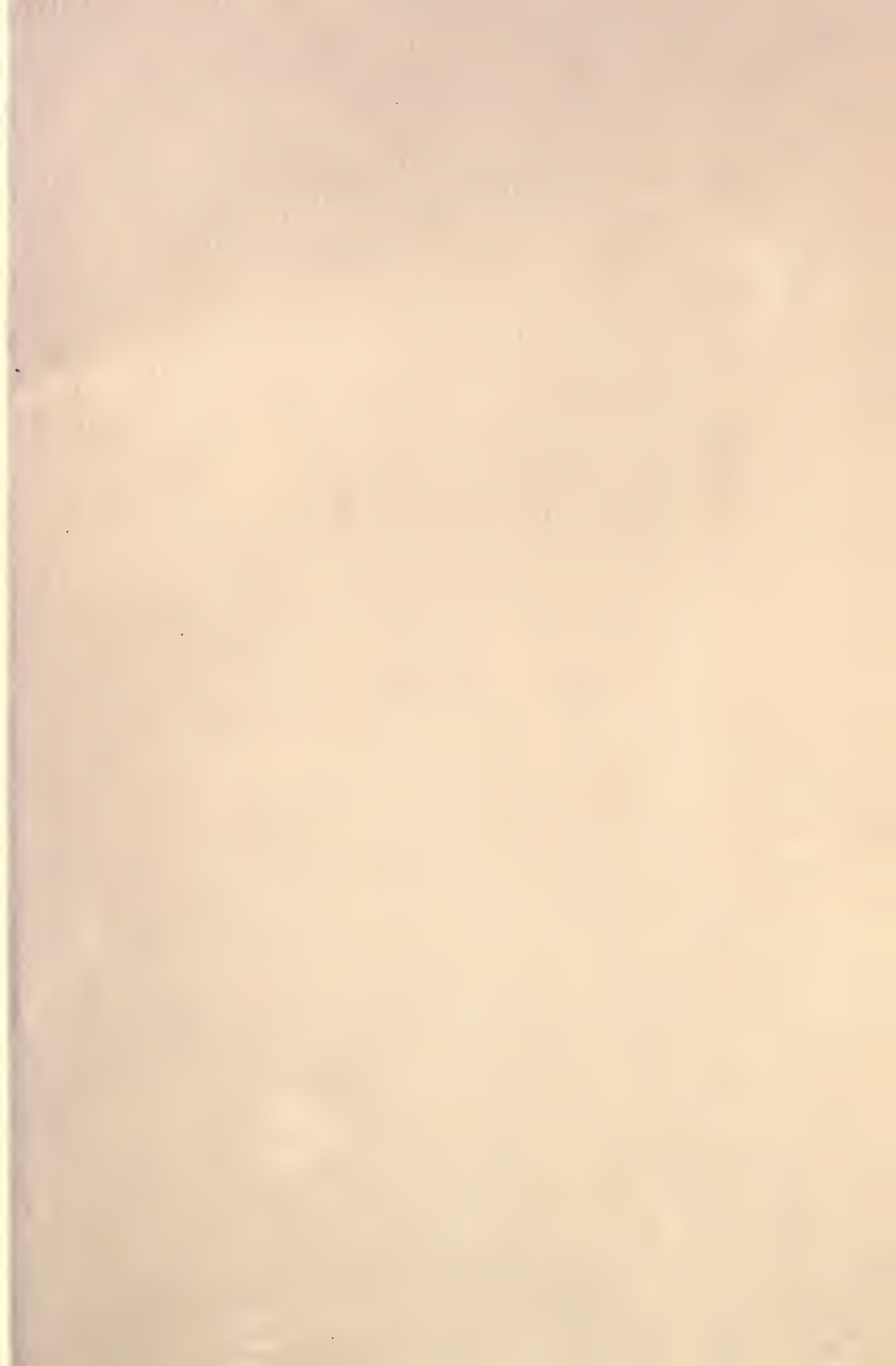
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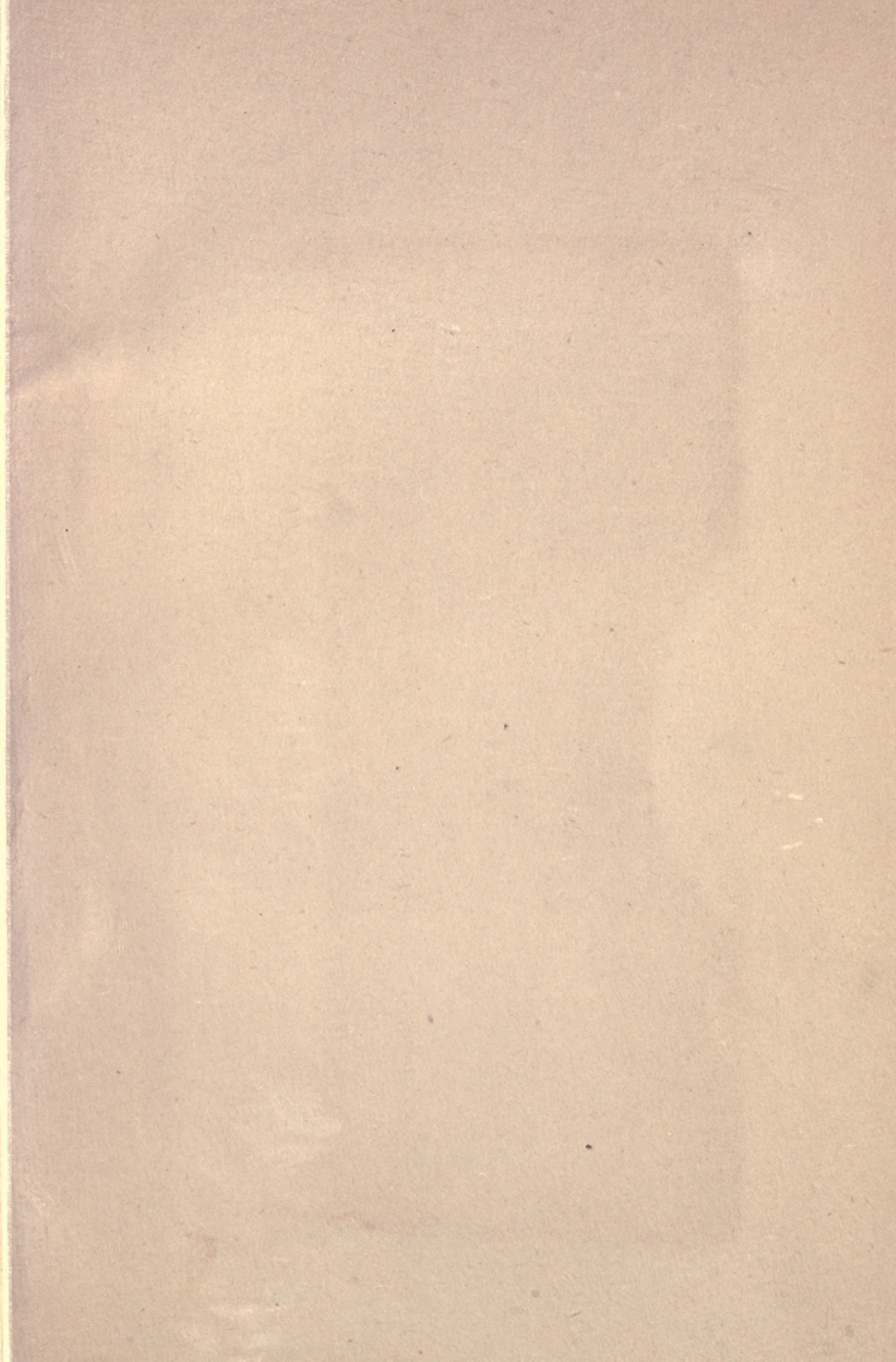
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